TELOS

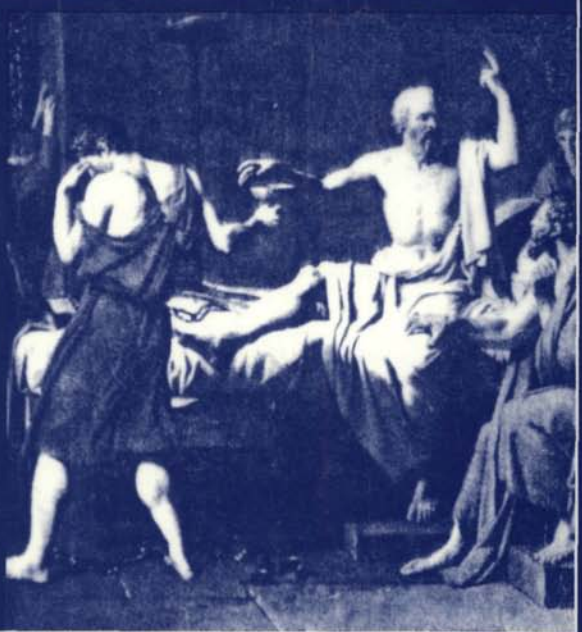
Number 81 Fall 1989

Perestroika etc.	Back to Adorno	*Robert Hullot-Kentor*
	The Impact of *Perestroika* on the US	*Tim Luke*
	Avoiding the East European Question	*Miron Wolnicki*
	On Soviet Military Industries	*Kuznetsov/Shirokov*
	Exorcising *Perestroika*	*Moishe Gonzales*
More on Weber	*Reply to* Guy Oakes	*Luciano Pellicani*
	Four Questions for Pellicani	*Guy Oakes*
	Weber's Two Spirits of Capitalism	*Walter Wallace*
Reviews:	Quest for Uncertainty	*Robert Antonio*
	Commodification and Sexology	*Lawrence Birken*
	Obsessive Democracy	*Nanette Funk*
	Sartre's Paradox	*Eleni Mahaira-Odoni*
	Croce, Gramsci, and Marxism	*Maurice A. Finocchiaro*

SPECIAL SECTION ON:

INTELLECTUALS AND THE UNIVERSITY

Klaus Heinrich
Pierre Bourdieu
Claude Karnoouh
Russell A. Berman
Paul Piccone



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Telos

A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought

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Table of Contents

Articles

Introduction 3
Paul Piccone
Back to Adorno 5
Robert Hullot-Kentor
The Other "Global Warming": The Impact of *Perestroika* on the US 30
Tim Luke
Avoiding the East European Question 41
Miron Wolnicki
Problems of Conversion of Soviet Defense Industries 52
Evgenii Kuznetsov and Felix Shirokov

Notes

Reply to Guy Oakes 63
Luciano Pellicani
Four Questions Concerning *The Protestant Ethic* 77
Guy Oakes
Max Weber's Two Spirits of Capitalism 86
Walter L. Wallace

Special Section on Intellectuals and the University

The Spiritual Impoverishment of the German University 91
Klaus Heinrich
The Corporatism of the Universal:
The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World 99
Pierre Bourdieu
Notes on the Crisis of the University 111
Claude Karnoouh
Perestroika for the University! 115
Russell A. Berman
The Reuniversalization of the University? 122
Paul Piccone

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Reviews

Exorcising *Perestroika* 130
Moishe Gonzales

Quest for Uncertainty 154
Robert Antonio

Commodification and Sexology 162
Lawrence Birken

Obsessive Democracy 171
Nanette Funk

Sartre's Paradox 181
Eleni Mahaira-Odoni

Croce, Gramsci, and Marxism 189
Maurice A. Finocchiaro

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Introduction

It is not exactly news that universities are in crisis and that intellectuals in the traditional sense are an endangered species. Earlier discussions on this subject in Telos *71 and 73 indicated the extent to which the present cultural and pedagogical paralysis in institutions of allegedly "higher learning" and the collective cretinization of those who have become its functionaries is rooted in broader social problems. Those particular discussions, however, were peculiar for a journal with* Telos' *eurocentric history in that they were exclusively focused on the American context — one implicitly assumed as paradigmatic for other Western societies.*

In this issue, the discussion is broadened by including European contributors from outside the relatively narrow Telos *circle: Klaus Heinrich, Pierre Bourdieu and Claude Karnoouh. The result is a clearer picture of the problem and a broader spectrum of opinions. Elegantly clothed in a theological language that turns out to be more biting than most so-called "radical" critiques, Heinrich's complaint about the de-eroticization of the university, the loss of* Geist *and sense of community, the price exacted by bureaucratization and an increasing research orientation confirms the original suspicion that the German university is not much more intellectually healthy than its American counterpart. While betraying his academic pedigree in his utopian longing for the university as society's self-consciousness — a community of scholars committed to truth and learning, entrusted to provide moral guidance to society at large — Heinrich manages to hit a number of important nails squarely on the head, and very much in the spirit of earlier* Telos *accounts of the same themes.*

Diametrically opposed to Heinrich, in what was originally a lecture delivered in Tokyo, Bourdieu uncritically assumes intellectuals to be agents of universality and outlines possible strategies to safeguard both their privileged position and their future effectiveness. His corporatist proposal is meant, first and foremost, to defend their autonomy, *while simultaneously enhancing their status as spokesmen for the kind of universality they have access to as intellectuals. As the two closing contributions suggest, however, such an account may not be entirely in touch with present socio-political realities. A more promising road to universality for terminally academicized intellectuals — practically the only ones left — would be for them to cut the nonsense about cultural entrepreneurialism or syndicalism, which has historically tended to destroy their critical faculties, and concentrate instead on what they can do best: teach and criticize.*

On a different subject, Robert Hullot-Kentor discusses how the American reception of Adorno's thought has been sabotaged by poor translations, which have resulted in incomprehension and thus facilitated the acceptance of the Habermasian reading as legitimate. By closely analyzing Habermas' flattening of Critical Theory into another eclectic neo-Kantian version of communication theory, Kentor describes the considerable distance separating the first generation of Critical Theorists and their alleged heirs. This he takes to be sufficient

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ground to interpret Critical Theory along lines other than those proposed by most American academic epigones, by reading Adorno in a different non-Kantian light — a reading Telos *has hitherto presupposed but never bothered to systematically elaborate.*

Dealing with similar traditional concerns, contributions by Tim Luke, Miron Wolnicki, Moishe Gonzales and Kuznetsov/Shirokov continue investigations into the meaning and impact of the Soviet perestroika. *In all the Western gloating about the collapse of "really existing socialism," what has been overlooked is the long-term impact it is likely to have on Western societies in general and the US in particular. Contrary to Panglossian leftist speculations as to the possible ways to redistribute domestically that chunk of the GNP presently wasted on a defense budget rendered largely obsolete by the communist collapse, Luke examines the extent to which military Keynesianism has been the foundation of post-WWII US — and,* ipso facto, *Western — economic policy. Far from ushering in utopia or its postmodern equivalent, Luke points out how the American version of* perestroika *precipitated by such a sudden series of events could cause considerable domestic dislocations.*

Similarly, Wolnicki dashes East European hopes of breaking with central planning and Comecon with the help of massive Western aid. The end of the Cold War also means growing irrelevance for a part of the world hitherto essential to the post-WWII bipolar geopolitical structure. When all the present nationalist, ethnic and religious euphoria successfully marketed by the mass media as the final victory of democracy over communism will have given way to the somber realization that abstract political rights have negligible nutritive value, the Second World will find itself cut off from Soviet support, at the mercy of the logic of capital, and rapidly becoming part of the Third World.

While not contributing much not already known among more informed Soviet scholars, Kuznetsov's and Shirokov's account (out of the proverbial horse's mouth) of how a backward civilian industry became the Achilles' heel of an otherwise frighteningly powerful military establishment should provide food for thought concerning the roots of perestroika *in socio-economic disorganization rather than in idealistic longings for democracy. Left Sovietologists and those whom Gonzales describes as "civil society ideologists" of course will draw exactly the opposite conclusions, thus maintaining their perfect record in misunderstanding Soviet realities. Predicated on an arrogant and misinformed denial of the very possibility of reforming bureacratic collectivism, their ideological reading of the collapse of East European communist regimes, after Gorbachev pulled the plug on them, will inevitably focus on a mythical resurgence of "civil society" — which will probably turn out to be a magma of prejudices, chauvinisms and assorted irrationalities necessitating the reestablishment of strong central state apparatuses faster than present ones can be dismantled.*

On a variety of different topics, Luciano Pellicani, Guy Oakes and Walter L. Wallace close (presumably) the Weber debate begun in Telos *78, while Antonio, Birken, Funk, Mahaira-Odoni and Finocchiaro discuss, respectively, the legacy of progressivism, recent developments in sexology and post-Marxist democratic theory, as well as new books on Sartre and Gramsci.*

Paul Piccone

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Back to Adorno

Robert Hullot-Kentor

The only legitimate "back to" is one that calls for a return to what was never reached in the first place, which is the case with Adorno's work. In America, his life work was (to take Merwin's phrase) born into a bottle. While this bottle may be about to burst, to date every conceivable reason has contributed to the delay in his work being better known here — from the unfamiliarity of the idealist tradition to the decline of Marxism. Not least in importance has been the overshadowing vogue of deconstruction, which has done inestimable damage to critical thought. Hard won insights into class structure, surplus repression, and conformism have been passed off in favor of the refinement of techniques of avoidance and the glamorization of a sort of punning that used to be dismissed as the last resort of a washed-out imagination. Just where such imagination fits in best happens to be right at the top. If by a quirk of fate one ended up looking around Harvard this past season, it was possible to come across a whole crowd of people who had written books and essays with the word "difference" in the title, nestled by a Christmas tree, scores in open hands, caroling, primarily worried whether every part was covered. Their ironic glances, claiming to put it all at a distance, insured that they were perfectly at home. If, however, cracks have appeared in formalism's lacquered surface, any return to Adorno must still contend with the damage done to his writings by their inadequate translation and the blunting of his thought by the ensuing decade and a half of misunderstanding and neglect. New translations are needed. This is particularly true in the case of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, a seminal work that has been especially

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lamed in translation.[1] Any attempt, however, to take a new look at this book — even if a completely dependable translation were available — must also confront Habermas who, as the result of a terrifically unlucky historical mismatch, has emerged as the preeminent representative of the Frankfurt School on this side of the Atlantic.

Dialectic of Enlightenment Reintroduced

Dialectic of Enlightenment was co-authored by Adorno and Horkheimer in California between 1939 and 1944. It was first circulated under the title *Philosophical Fragments* in a limited mimeographed edition among members of the exiled Institute for Social Research. In 1947 this manuscript appeared in book form, bearing its present title and significantly revised. Obscurities were edited out; capitalism and totalitarianism, previously conflated with fascism, were differentiated. But, most importantly, Marxist terminology was replaced by more neutral economic and sociological expressions: proletariat became worker, capitalist became employer, and exploitation became suffering. This hedging, the immigrant authors hoped, would leave federal authorities unruffled, whose anticommunism they had every reason to fear.[2] What has to be explained, however, is why, years after the war and the authors' return to Europe, the volume was once again cloaked and in a more encompassing fashion. Once the original edition was sold out — in the late fifties — no further publication was permitted. In spite of a broad interest in the book, the repeated urgings of Institute insiders (such as Marcuse), and the circulation of a pirated student edition, a new edition was only authorized several months before Adorno's death in 1969.[3]

Though it was not generally known, the reason for the protracted delay in republication was a major disagreement between its authors. Adorno himself had reservations about the book, but he supported a new German edition,[4] and in his lectures openly complained that the text still had not been translated into English. It was Horkheimer who repeatedly blocked any republication. This disagreement over the book's fate was not an isolated incident, but involved fundamental differences

1. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. by John Cumming (New York: Continuum Press, 1978). The limitations of the current translation are discussed at the end of this essay.

2. This summary is based on G.S. Noerr, "Nachwort des Herausgebers," pp. 423-542, especially pp. 443-44 (published, along with "Nachwort von Jürgen Habermas," as appendices to Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* [Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1986]) and conversations with Rolf Tiedemann in July 1987.

3. Habermas, "Nachwort," *op. cit.*, p. 277.

4. Noerr, *op. cit.*, p. 449

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between the two authors. Whereas all of Adorno's later writings reach back to this book, Horkheimer was not interested in the reappearance of a work whose stridency and radicalism was far from the thinking of his later years, and which, even in the context of his early development marked a lacuna. Except for several essays written while *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was being drafted, the work fits uneasily into Horkheimer's *oeuvre*. Horkheimer was, after all, the person who had been instrumental in the rejection of Benjamin's *Habilitationsschrift* on Baroque drama, who was increasingly drawn to Schopenhauer, and who at the end of his life was against birth control and dissonant music. He certainly had an oblique relation from the start to a text that owes much to Benjamin and whose undercurrents are those of erotic freedom and aesthetic radicalism. Horkheimer stood at a much greater distance from Adorno than might be guessed from the reputation of their friendship and the book's joint signature. This raises the issue of who actually wrote which of the book's essays.

Authorship

The editor of Horkheimer's collected works, G.S. Noerr, has made a detailed study of the essays' typescripts, the files where they were stored, and the handwriting of those who revised the manuscripts. Though painstaking, such positivistic philology is not of great use here because, as Leo Lowenthal and Gretl Adorno have pointed out, the essays were the result of collective dictation and intensive conversation. The typescripts Noerr examined are mediated documents. More is to be learned from stylistic comparisons. With regard to just this issue, Habermas has claimed that it is obvious that Horkheimer wrote the lead essay.[5] Habermas is so sure that this is self-evident to any careful reader that he provides no support for his claim. Yet he does offer counter evidence elsewhere by citing some of the well-known formulations from the lead essay: "Every attempt to break out of nature's power by breaking nature only results in deeper subordination to nature's power"; "Men and women have always had to choose between subjection to nature or the subjection of nature to the self"; "Just as the myths already realize enlightenment, so enlightenment with every step becomes more deeply embedded in mythology."[6] Habermas did not choose the most startling

5. Habermas, "Bemerkungen zur Entwicklung des Horkheimerischen Werkes," in: *Max Horkheimer heute: Werk und Wirkung*, edited by Alfred Schmidt and Norbert Altwicker (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1986), p. 171.

6. Habermas, "Nachwort," *op. cit.*, p. 277.

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lines from the essay, though it would be overly picky to complain about any selection from an essay in which every sentence has acquired a reputation. Each is crucially memorable and — in revenge — sure to be cited into oblivion.

This quality of the lead essay, however, casts doubt on Horkheimer's primacy in its composition. With few exceptions, there are no comparable lines in the rest of Horkheimer's work; neither before nor after did he formulate such compelling ideas. In contrast, the elasticity of thought, rhetorical ingenuity and aphoristic trenchancy of the essay characterizes all of Adorno's writings — from his first book on *Kierkegaard* to the last lines of *Aesthetic Theory*. Comparing the volumes Horkheimer and Adorno wrote independently of one another while they were working on *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is like juxtaposing Spinoza and a T.V. philosopher: Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* is written on the same level as *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, whereas Horkheimer's *Eclipse of Reason* is akin to valuable, though diluted culture criticism of the same period (such as Erich Kahler's *The Tower and the Abyss*).

A transcript of a conversation that occurred early in the first year of their collaboration in California gets at the truth of their styles. During a strained moment in their discussion, Horkheimer said, "Our linguistic differences could be summed up as follows: in your work the consecrated appears in many passages, in mine what appears is the cozy [*das Gemütliche*], the simplification. If we kept this in mind, we would do better." This is not a compliment. Divinatory language did not impress Horkheimer. And to deliver this sting, he also had to hurt himself: however accurate the self-characterization, a cozy style for a man who readily compared himself to Husserl could not have been his ideal.[7] This is not a moment for things to begin to improve in a conversation, and indeed Horkheimer went on to attack Adorno's style with certainly the most damning sociological epithet of the Hitler era: Adorno's language — he continued — was based on analogies and thus bore the "form of petty-bourgeois thought, that something always means something."[8] Adorno retaliated, expressing in a nutshell what undoubtedly many have sensed — if not explicitly — as what does distinguish their styles: "I would object to your writing that it has an element that conspires with the *status quo*. Your writing is beneath the experiences that you want to communicate, my writing is above what I am able to communicate."[9] It is clearly

7. Horkheimer, Letter to Pollock, cited by Noerr, *ibid.*, p. 432.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 507.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 508.

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the latter form of writing that distinguishes the lead essay as a whole. This is not, however, reason to reverse Habermas' claim, and argue that the lead essay — or the book — is exclusively Adorno's work. What Habermas, for reasons yet to be discussed, does not want to consider is that the book really was, as the authors themselves repeatedly claimed, an act of collaboration. Though the construction of the book is characteristically Adornian, it is far from unalloyed Adorno. Something has been mixed in. The lead essay, for example, by beginning with a quote from Francis Bacon, shows Horkheimer's propensity for the history of ideas, which runs throughout the essay. But even the Odysseus essay, which many — Habermas included — have taken to be exclusively Adorno's work, at points shows what Horkheimer called his simplifying style. It relaxes Adorno's grip and lets one catch ones breath before being swallowed up by the next line. There is also an occasional glibness that otherwise never occurs in Adorno's own writings. The book is throughout a hybrid.

Habermas and Dialectic of Enlightenment

Habermas' "Postscript" is an important key to the current situation of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in Germany. He claims that it is necessary to intervene to save the great work from the very dialectic of progress as regression that the text analyzes. The book is threatened by its own success: students have become possessive of it, and this possessiveness runs contrary to its truth: "its radical character threatens to disappear." For the good of the book, it is necessary to work against the "falsely possessive relation to the penetrating truths of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*."[10] However, the analysis of the cunning of reason presented by the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* knows more about Habermas than does Habermas about the book: the opening gestures of his essay mimic those of his opponent in order to be in a better position to defeat him. Yet Habermas' ruse is badly staged. If he had been Odysseus escaping from Polyphemous' cave, he would have ridden on top of the sheep, and that would have done it for Western civilization. His efforts to feign the book's salvation while condemning it are so crude that one has to rub ones eyes as one reads: Habermas' critique of possessiveness goes no farther than awarding the lead-essay to Horkheimer: "In it, Horkheimer developed the basic ideas of a critique of enlightenment that today is on everyone's lips."[11] As for that radical character and those penetrating truths in need of refuge,

10. Habermas, "Nachwort," *op. cit.*, p. 278.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 277.

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none are discovered. On the contrary, for Habermas the book is altogether a monstrosity, a Nietzschean attack on reason that claims enlightenment is irrevocably destructive: "It is no longer Marx, but Nietzsche who points the way. It is no longer a theory of society saturated with history, but a radical critique of reason denouncing the union of reason and domination."[12] It is a critique mired in the *aporia* of being unable to account for the grounds of its own criticism: "If enlightenment is caught up in an unstoppable process of self-destruction, where then would such a critique, which made this diagnosis, have a right to such a diagnosis?"[13]

To dismiss a thought on the basis of insufficient "right" is a meager hermeneutic, whose picket-fence mentality betrays its limitations in its simplified understanding of Nietzsche. In any case, the "radical critique of reason" cited by Habermas is not in any way Adorno's position. He never considered the self-destructiveness of enlightenment a necessity. On the contrary, this necessity is, in the strongest sense, an illusion, which is not to say that this illusion is without consequence. How to break this illusion is the key problem of all of Adorno's philosophy. But, if Habermas' interpretation is correct, how did Horkheimer — whom Habermas considers a man of reason — get involved in such an irrational project? According to Habermas, Horkheimer's participation was the result of being isolated with Adorno in California. In these conditions, an otherwise reasonable interdisciplinary scholar fell to dark thoughts: "The end of the journal, his extraction from the interdisciplinary context of the Institute and the beginning of an exclusive relation to Adorno: these are the circumstances that signal both the final break from an offensive, materialist theory of society directed towards change and withdrawal into speculation — a transition to a deeply pessimistic, wait-and-see philosophy of history aimed at surviving the winter."[14]

Overlooking for a moment the theoretical aspects of this criticism, it is worth responding to the recurring *idée reçue* of Adorno the pessimist that underlies this description of a good-natured, progressive materialist tangled in the web of a speculative mind's depressiveness. Habermas' portrayal is a distortion. And the need for distortion can be read out of the criticism itself: The charge of pessimism betrays a narrow consciousness that characteristically associates the hazard of moroseness with "absorption in speculation," with slipping into that uncanny region where,

12. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Habermas, "Nachwort," *op. cit.* p. 280.

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when left to itself, thought coils and uncoils. A rigidity *vis à vis* what is under the surface motivates Habermas' comment. The charge of pessimism is more pessimistic than any pessimism it claims to perceive.[15] Even pessimism is dialectical, and especially in Adorno's case the relentlessness of his life's work can hardly be attributed to a lack of hope for change, but only to the most naive optimism, which was continually transformed — by the refusal to compromise — into an instrument of cognition. This dialectic of pessimism was opaque to a whole group of people who worked with Adorno at the Institute for Social Research, and who commented often on how strange it was that someone who wrote "like that," who worked with such intense seriousness, could at other times be so *albern* (silly, absurd). Without any further research, those who found this combination puzzling would be self-described "optimists."

Habermas' depiction of Horkheimer and Adorno is confuted by the same transcript discussed earlier. In it, Horkheimer contrasts his own recurrent depression with Adorno's optimism, whose naivety bothers him. The following conversation goes such a long way towards characterizing the discussants, that it is worth quoting at length:[16]

"*Horkheimer*: . . . You never say anything about the positive object of

15. There are many variants on the theme of Adorno the pessimist, and they almost always pair — as does Habermas — the charge of pessimism with an attack on modern art: "Adorno's advocacy of modernism, it must be remembered, springs from a social pessimism which is unable to identify any contemporary agent of political change; given the prevailing technocratic logic of an administered society, the dissonant, fragmentary nature of modern art offers passive resistance to the all-pervasive commodification of experience. . . . Feminism, however, rejects such pessimism in its identification of women as an oppressed class. . ." Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming), p. 163. The language here draws distantly on Marx, but very distantly: Marx's interest in the proletariat was not because he could not find other oppressed groups, but because its claims — he thought — were universal. In the passage quoted above, however, this universality is sloughed for a modest "*Je suis la revolution*," phrased in a sociologese in which disempowerment takes shape as a Robinsonade, on which Adorno comments: "These prototypical figures of the ship-wrecked make out of their weakness — the weakness of individuality separated from the collective — their social strength. Thrown to the mercy of the sea, helplessly isolated, their isolation dictates the ruthless pursuit of their self-interest." As to shipwrecked, there is no limit today to people in this position, whereas an inability to recognize the content of modern art means an inability to know this. Adorno, the "pessimist," wary of vanguards, though hardly obtuse to the situation of women, concluded the "Concept of Enlightenment" with Horkheimer: "While bourgeois economy multiplied violence through the mediation of the market, it also multiplied its objects and forces to such an extent that for their administration not just the kings, not even the middle classes are necessary, but everyone. They learn from the power of things to dispense at last with power." (*Dialektik der Aufklärung*, *op. cit.*, p. 60).

16. Horkheimer's initial comment is motivated by irritation with a metaphysical quality of Adorno's thought. The conversation is formal; they address one another as *Sie*.

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negative theology, yet you leave no doubt that such a theology exists. . . .

Adorno: . . . I have no secret doctrine. I believe, however, that I have an eye for picking up from things the reflection of a source of light that could not be the object of intentions and thoughts.

Horkheimer: Can one really do anything with these sorts of ideas? My difficulty is that I always get exactly as far as we have gotten today, that is, as far as objective despair. . . .

Adorno: What gives knowledge the stamp of authenticity is the reflection of possibility. This is what my fundamental philosophical experience is as well as the origin of your critical energy. . . . I believe that there is a certain sort of concrete insight [*Erkenntnis*] with a force that — even in its particularity — contains the possibility of the whole. The fragmentary concrete. [Adorno gives an instance of what he means].[17]

Horkheimer: You have a pundit's eye for everything. . . .

Adorno: . . . My comment [the example of the fragmentary concrete] has been criticized as naive. Is not this criticism already an admission that one no longer believes in happiness? Is not this naiveté a higher form of knowledge than the unnaive knowledge of analysis?

Horkheimer: I have not given up the claim to happiness, but I do not believe in happiness. Whoever really believes in happiness is in the worst sense naive.

Adorno: We must be at once more naive and much less naive.[18]

"Look what I have for You."

Why would Habermas want to manipulate the exclusive attribution of a work he thoroughly dislikes to the author he seems to prefer?[19] By ascribing the heart of the book to Horkheimer and then showing that the book itself is an aberration in the life of a once reasonable man, Habermas can arrange for Horkheimer to disown the work in reason's name. Habermas is not concerned then with possessiveness versus truth; rather, he wants to knock the book out of the hands of those previously mentioned students. The maneuvering here is part of an ongoing struggle in Germany between the heir of the Institute for Social Research and its

17. "Little drum: three rapid little beats of a single instrument awaken the feeling of a crowd marching in the distance. Thus is remembered that all music, and even the most lonely, concerns the many, whose gesture the sound of the drum preserves." From the essay, "Motive," in: *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 16, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978) p. 280.

18. Horkheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 506-08.

19. Habermas' relation to Horkheimer is complex. The two men certainly did not see eye to eye; and Habermas' identification with him in the context of the "Nachwort" to *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is largely a specific tactic for his criticism of Adorno.

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most important figure. The relative forces in this struggle are currently not in doubt. In Frankfurt, Adorno is virtually forgotten.[20] And as Habermas has become more powerful, he has become increasingly confident in making completely implausible claims about Adorno. His effort, for example, to assert that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is a Nietzschean repudiation of reason runs up against the inconvenience that the book is throughout explicitly concerned with the recuperation of reason. The preface to the book states as its intention the conceptualization of a "positive concept of enlightenment."[21] To reconcile this repeatedly stated aim of the book with his own thesis, and after having already claimed that the book is fundamentally an attack on reason, Habermas abruptly throws in that Horkheimer wrote the good lines; Adorno, the bad: "In the text. . . the points of reference for this position [the recuperation of enlightenment] can only be found in those chapters that betray Horkheimer's hand. I mean that the insistence on an almost eschatologically potentiated power of theory; the belief in an anti-authoritarian tendency in enlightenment; and finally, the conjuring of a self-transcendent enlightenment. Other passages, which I would attribute rather to Adorno, stand in crass contradiction to these positions."[22] If there is anything stylistically obvious, it is that the phrase "crass contradiction" makes a remarkably big lump on the page. Even if one suspected that every explicit argument for reason in the volume was from Horkheimer's hand, it would only be necessary to open up to any page of Adorno's many other works to realize that one was mistaken. Here is a remark from a lecture course entitled "The Philosophy of History" — a course important in this context because in it Adorno explains many of the central ideas of *Dialectic of Enlightenment*: "Whether history has meaning, depends on whether humanity is able to constitute itself as humanity; whether humanity achieves this or not will depend on whether reason — as a force of the domination of nature — is able to gain control of itself, to reflect on itself."[23] The concepts of humanity and reason are identical here, and there is no question where Adorno stands on the matter. He is pursuing a critique of reason by way of reason. How this is possible is not obvious; if it were, it would not have occupied all of Adorno's life. But somehow Habermas missed the topic. Adorno, he insists, became entangled in a radical denunciation of reason that could not ground itself. Realizing this, the best Adorno

20. This was Rolf Tiedemann's assessment of the situation in Frankfurt in July, 1987.
21. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. xvi.
22. Habermas, "Nachwort," *op. cit.*, p. 289.
23. "*Geschichtsphilosophie*," unpublished lecture series, p. 19.

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could do was to ignore the contradiction. This was possible in Adorno's case because he could distract himself with art: Adorno "showed greater equanimity [than Horkheimer] towards the *aporia* of the self-referential critique of reason because he could bring another motif into play. . . The aesthetic experience of modern art had opened itself up to him as an *independent* source of insight."[24]

Just under the surface of Habermas' condescending description of Adorno's relation to modern art is Habermas' pride that modern art has not opened itself up to him. This comment fits tightly with other remarks in the "Postscript." His suspicion of speculation is of a part with a broader disdain for any objectification of the imagination. He draws a line this side of a sphere that gains its truth by way of non-communication, by resistance. In its wooden response to the ambiguous, communicative action would score poorly on several scales of the *Authoritarian Personality*. Perhaps the most telling moment in Habermas' "Postscript" is when, with a bullying wink reminiscent of the students who once heckled Adorno, he refers to Horkheimer as Horkheimer but to Adorno as "Teddy,"[25] sensing in that final vowel just what he senses in the aesthetic as a whole, and taking the same stance toward it. Habermas styles himself the keeper of reason's flame, but in his relation to the aesthetic, more evident is reason's fury.

Reason, Aesthetics, and Enlightenment

The division between reason and the aesthetic, which Habermas claims to discern in Adorno's work, is a division drawn and insisted upon by Habermas, not by Adorno. Paradoxically, by insisting on this division Habermas separates himself from the Enlightenment tradition of which he is so self-assured. For throughout the German Enlightenment, and especially since Kant, the defense of reason has been conceived as inseparable from the aesthetic. *Dialectic of Enlightenment* — and all of Adorno's work — is the modern successor of this tradition. Showing just how tightly bound to this tradition Adorno's work is will help counter Habermas' interpretation of Adorno as the enemy of enlightenment. This is best approached from the perspective of the problem of the dialectic of enlightenment as conceived by Adorno.

In the "Introduction" to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the authors present the familiar figure of this dialectic: "The fallen nature of man today cannot be separated from social progress."[26] Adorno's writings and

24. Habermas, "Nachwort," *op. cit.*
25. *Ibid.*, p. 284.
26. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. xiv (translation modified).

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lectures are filled with variations of this idea. In a lecture, for example, he stated: "Precisely in that freedom represses nature, freedom falls back into mere nature."[27] In these comments, "social progress" and "freedom" are synonymous with reason or human spontaneity. Progress in the control of nature results in regression to nature. The dialectic of reason is a dialectic of natural history, of history embedded in a fallen nature from which it seeks to escape. This idea has been the object of a long reflection in the West since the biblical conception of the relation of self-assertion and disaster, of the mastery of nature and regression to it as labor and death. In Kant, the dialectic of enlightenment is formulated in epistemological terms: "The paradox of knowledge is that the more articulate and objective it becomes, the more it covers over and obscures reality as it is in-itself. The same human imagination which generates appearance casts an impenetrable veil over being-itself. As the end product of the cognitive process, the phenomenal object stands as a permanent barrier before the thing-in-itself."[28] Knowledge is the process of becoming embedded in nature, for Kant a nexus of gapless necessity. This epistemology was itself the result of the effort to recuperate reason from empiricism and the reduction of reason to nature. Yet the Kantian critique of empiricism resulted in the delimitation of experience to the empirical, which is functional in the Kantian system because, as an epistemological equivalent of the biblical "through a glass darkly," the obscurity of what is beyond is part of longing for it, and thus this obscurity was for Kant a rational goad to the course of infinite self-perfection. At the same time, however, the radicalness of this epistemology threatened to darken the glass altogether, challenging the recuperation of reason. Reason, by its own concept, must be realizable. However, experience limited to the empirical is unable to instantiate the possibility of this realization. The third critique is a necessity of the project of the recuperation of reason, because in the harmony of the mental faculties the judgment of taste is the perception of the possibility of the realization of reason. Aesthetic experience is the "as if" perception that the world exists for us, giving assurance that reason can be realized, but without threatening the ethical rigor of the Kantian system by bringing this goal within grasp. It is important to have in mind — in terms of the tradition of thought in which Adorno stands — that here, as aesthetics becomes the key to the recuperation of reason, this form of judgment is not separate from reason, but

27. "Einleitung in die Moralphilosophie" unpublished lecture series, p. 157.
28. George Schrader, "Hegel's Contribution to Phenomenology," *The Monist* 48 (January, 1964), p. 24.

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is the play of reason itself.

Kant did not foresee that writing the Third Critique, rather than simply completing the system, would ultimately draw the other two critiques into its own orbit as a sort of second Copernican turn. Yet Schiller's *Letters on Aesthetic Education*, the next major aesthetics, was conceived from the start with the idea of the dependence of reason on the aesthetic. And this aesthetics is a pivotal point between Kant and Adorno. As will be immediately evident to those already familiar with Adorno's work — and as will be elucidated later for those who are not — every element of Adorno's analysis of the dialectic of enlightenment and its relation to aesthetics has its precedent in Schiller's aesthetics, beginning with the natural historical figure of the dialectic of enlightenment itself: "We disown nature in its rightful sphere only to experience its tyranny in the sphere of morality, and by resisting the impact nature makes upon our senses, we receive from it our principles."[29] Reason, the principle of unity, excludes what is other than itself — nature — and thus regresses to nature. The measure of the failure of the development of reason is that it is sacrificial: "It will always argue a still defective education if the moral character is able to assert itself only by sacrificing the natural."[30] One result of this faulty development is that society has not brought about sociality, but egotism: "In the very lap of the most exquisitely developed social life egotism has founded its system, and without ever acquiring therefrom a heart that is truly sociable."[31] Though it might be hoped that egotism would at least be matched by fearless individuality, the opposite is the case: this egotism is conformist: "The fetters of the physical tighten ever more alarmingly, so that fear of losing what we have stifles even the most burning impulse towards improvement, and the maxim of passive obedience passes for the supreme wisdom."[32] Whereas Schiller took sacrifice to be the measure of regression, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* sacrifice itself is the form of progress as regression. And, whereas Schiller thought that egotism becomes conformity as a result of a fear of a loss of ease, for Adorno self-assertion as self-renunciation is the route by which the self adapts to the *status quo*.

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29. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, trans. by E. Wilkinson and L. Willoughby (London: Oxford, 1982), p. 27. I have generally used this translation, but have modified it when needed.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

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Odysseus or Reason and Aesthetics

Schiller took the side of reason against reason, intending to counter the dialectic of enlightenment by way of aesthetics. Aesthetic semblance, which he conceived in terms of Kant's free play of reason, is to recuperate reason. To restore those narrowed by the dialectic of enlightenment, Schiller writes that it is necessary to "surround them, wherever you meet them, with noble, great and ingenious forms and encompass them about with the symbols of excellence, until semblance conquers actuality, and art triumphs over nature."[33] Echoing Schiller, Adorno wrote in his earliest aesthetics that the problem of art is "to change the world by the strength of an image."[34] All of Adorno's writings follow Schiller in conceiving the solution to the dialectic of enlightenment, the realization of reason, as dependent on aesthetic semblance. Just as for Schiller the aesthetic is the play of reason, so Adorno conceives of reason as inextricable from art. In "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment," the relation of the two is developed programmatically and their inextricability could not be more evident: the essay is the study of an art-work whose protagonist, in his struggle against myth, is the model of the origin of reason. The inner process of the *Odyssey* is, literally, the process of reason. Odysseus' struggle against mythical powers in the achievement of self-identity becomes the order of the epic's self-identity, its organization of the mythical legends into a whole.[35] The fate of reason, however, differs in the two cases: in the former, reason regresses; in Odysseus' struggle against myth, it is myth that prevails: "the inexorable force that he [Odysseus] commands, ironically triumphs in that he himself returns home an inexorable force, the judge and avenger of the legacy of the powers from which he escaped."[36] On the level of the epic, however, this process becomes the production of semblance by a *caesura* in the text: "by virtue of this *caesura* the semblance of freedom lights up, which ever since civilization has not succeeded in extinguishing."[37]

Adorno's essay is thus constructed on several levels at once: One level

33. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
34. Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1989), p. 131.
35. Adorno reflects explicitly on this: "The myths are sedimented in the thematic layers of the *Odyssey*; the account given of them, however, the unity wrested from the diffuse legends, is at the same time the description of the flight of the individual from the mythic powers." (*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. 46. [translation modified]).
36. *Ibid.*, p. 48 (translation modified).
37. *Ibid.*, p. 79 (translation modified).

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concerns the origin of reason that, on another level, becomes the structure of the epic. But there is a third level, one to which Habermas is obtuse. Habermas claims that those essays of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in which Adorno predominates — such as the Odysseus essay — do not have comments on the need to recuperate reason. Here Habermas is right. Such statements cannot be found in the Odysseus essay. But to suppose that the point of the essay is not the recuperation of reason would be like claiming that Hegel is only dialectical when he talks about dialectics. Habermas does not see that the Odysseus essay is — as it is titled — an "excursus," and specifically in the sense that it pursues in detail the "positive concept of enlightenment" developed in "The Concept of Enlightenment." This positive concept of knowledge is one that would no longer be the domination of nature, but the dissolution of domination and thus of natural history.[38] The essay does not talk about the recuperation of reason, but rather aims at the recovery of a content (the previously mentioned *caesura*) that is aesthetic — a content to which reason is essential and without which reason is devoid of reason. Just how Adorno conceived of this aesthetic *caesura*, how it reformulates the recuperation of reason through the relation of reason and aesthetics, is what now needs elucidation. But to do so first requires a discussion of his theory of the relation of sacrifice and reason in the Odysseus essay.

Cunning, Sacrifice and the Origin of Reason

In the collected transcripts of the discussions between Horkheimer and Adorno, Adorno's first mention of the intention that would direct the writing of "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment" actually refers to Oedipus rather than Odysseus: "There is a mythical category, which one would need to analyze carefully: cunning. Humanity pulls itself free of nature through cunning. Oedipus eliminates the puzzle of the sphinx by a trick, he does not actually solve it."[39] This is a proposal to study the *Urgeschichte der Subjektivität* [The Primal History of Subjectivity], the origin of the intellect by which a physically overwhelming force is outwitted. Adorno ultimately focused this study on Odysseus rather than Oedipus because, while both are classical figures of heroic intellect, Homer stands on the border of Western civilization between history and prehistory in a way that Sophocles does not. When Adorno planned

38. "Knowledge . . . can now become the dissolution of domination." *Ibid.*, p. 42.
39. Horkheimer, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

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this study of Odysseus he had already developed the rudiments of a philosophy of the history of cunning in his book on *Kierkegaard* (1933). But his comment to Horkheimer points back to the origins of both the Kierkegaard study and the Odysseus essay. A reconstruction of the origin of Adorno's insight into the form of cunning will help explain why he conceived it as the cipher through which progress becomes regression. Horkheimer, in reply to Adorno, recognized that the basis of Adorno's project was a critical transformation of Hegel: "In Swabian dialect 'thinking' and 'cunning' are the same word. If one holds to this Swabian motif, then Hegel's cunning of reason acquires a whole new interpretation. Or is perhaps that which Hegel calls reason nothing else than cunning?"[40]

As often in the transcripts, Horkheimer acts primarily as a sounding-board, announcing as discoveries and extrapolations what is actually fundamental to Adorno's thought in the first place. Adorno's project is unthinkable except as a critical transformation of Hegel's doctrine of the ruse of reason, which Hegel condensed most succinctly in the *Encyclopedia* when he wrote that "reason is as powerful as it is cunning."[41] This doctrine of the cunning of reason was Hegel's solution to history. He knew better than most that history "forms a picture of most fearful aspect and excites the profoundest emotions and the most hopeless sadness." Yet when this vision compelled him to ask: "to what principle, to what final purpose, have these monstrous sacrifices been offered?" his answer took the form of a justification of these sacrifices. The principle to which these sacrifices are made is unity: the self-conscious unity of spirit with itself. The creation of this unity is a perpetual act of cunning. The developing whole achieves higher levels of self-consciousness by way of its unwitting elements. World historical individuals and nations pursue immediate passions and interests, but in this pursuit unknowingly fulfill the aims of reason. In the moment of this realization their life comes to an end: "Once their objective is attained, they fall off like empty hulls from the kernel. They die like Alexander, they are murdered like Caesar, transported to Saint Helena like Napoleon. . . They were fortunate in being the agents of a purpose which constituted a step in the progress of the Universal Spirit. But as individuals . . . they were not what is commonly called happy, nor did they want to be."[42]

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40. *Ibid.*

41. Hegel, *Enzyklopaedie*, vol. 8, in *Theorie Werkausgabe* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971-78), Section 209, Zusatz, p. 265.

42. Hegel, *Reason in History*, trans. by Robert S. Hartman (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), p. 41. Quoted by Shlomo Avenieri, "Consciousness and History," in *New Studies in Hegel's Philosophy*, p. 110.

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The irony of this description is that, whereas the Hegelian spirit is modeled on individuality, here the process of the realization of spirit, the living individual, is obviously supererogatory. This amounts to the sublimation of the "monstrous sacrifices" of history in the apotheosis of the progress of spirit. Divested of this theodical veneer, however, Hegel's theory of the cunning of history became Adorno's fundamental insight into the dialectic of enlightenment: the unity of the self is the work of a sacrificial cunning. Just as Adorno argued in his first formulation of the dialectic of enlightenment that the Kierkegaardian dialectic of the self is a sacrificial process that is effectively the Hegelian dialectic turned inward, in the first excursus of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* he shows that the movement of Odysseus toward self-unity is a movement of self-sacrifice. To preserve himself — whether in his encounter with Polyphemous, Circe, or the Sirens — Odysseus must at every point renounce himself. Cunning is control through sacrifice, and progress is regression because the form of progress is sacrificial. Odysseus is a small scale model of the developing whole of world spirit.

On the basis of this insight, Adorno reconstructed the primal history of subjectivity. Cunning originates in sacrifice. Odysseus' cunning escape from mythical powers has its paradigm in the deceptiveness of mythical sacrifice, which in every instance aims to exchange as equivalents something less valuable for what is more valuable: the hecatombs for victory in war. Adorno shows that the overturning of sacrifice, and the movement toward the development of cunning inheres in the dialectic of sacrifice. In carrying out the deception, the supplicated deities are at the same time overthrown: "All human acts of sacrifice, methodically carried out, deceive the god to whom they are offered: they subordinate him to the primacy of human purposes and dissolve his power."[43] Cunning develops as progress in sacrificial substitution. The power to substitute an ox for a human sacrifice is no different from the power of the employer to substitute the labor of others for his or her own labor. "The Concept of Enlightenment" develops this theory of progress through sacrificial substitution to explain the development of discursive logic as a form implicit in mythical sacrifice: "Substitution in the course of sacrifice marks a step toward discursive logic. Even though the hind offered up for the daughter, and the lamb for the first-born, still had to have specific qualities, they already represented the species. . . . Substitutability reverses into universal fungibility."[44] The unity of

43. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. 50 (translation modified).
44. *Ibid.*, p. 10 (translation modified).

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knowledge sought by physics is the epitome of the ruse of reason in that this unity is the result of the sacrificial abstraction of the particularity of the world as a whole. The pivotal point at which myth becomes enlightenment and enlightenment becomes myth is sacrifice, and the transition from myth to enlightenment is progress in the power of substitutability. Whereas "The Concept of Enlightenment" follows out this dialectic particularly in regard to logic and the sciences, "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment" follows it out with regard to the history of the self. The unity of the self originates in the internalization of sacrifice as renunciation. Civilization begins with the sacrifice of the self to the self and the power of the self develops as its power of renunciation: "The history of civilization is the history of the introversion of sacrifice. In other words, it is the history of renunciation."[45] The actual form of Odysseus' cunning, whether with Polyphemous or Circe, is his ability to dominate himself, that is, to renounce himself in the service of his own self-preservation. Cunning resists nature *qua* myth, but in its sacrificial order it becomes myth.

Reversal of Domination

Dialectic of Enlightenment thus presents the origin of reason in sacrificial cunning and, because progress is sacrificial, this dialectic recreates the mythical world of sacrifice from which it wanted to escape. If this were as far as Horkheimer and Adorno went in their study, however, it would still go beyond Habermas' claim that *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is "a radical critique of reason denouncing the union of reason and domination."[46] Drawing a boundary always implicitly crosses that boundary. Insight into this Hegelian dialectic, however, is as anathema to Habermas as it is a constant source of Adorno's reflection throughout the Odysseus essay. One variant of this dialectic takes shape as the central concern of the Odysseus essay with the possibility of domination transcending domination — an idea that at every point and in the most paradoxical ways constantly seems to threaten to return Adorno's work to theodicy. The modern conception of the reversal of mediation, of course, was neither Hegel's nor Adorno's but one of the fundamental events in the modern history of the concept of the relation of technique and nature in German thought.[47] Beginning in the 18th century, with the reintroduction of

45. *Ibid.*, p. 55 (translation modified).
46. Habermas, "Nachwort," *op. cit.*, p. 282.
47. See H.S.V. Ogdan, "The Rejection of the Antithesis of Nature and Art in Germany, 1700-1800," *Journal of English and German Philology*, no. 38 (1939).

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Aristotle's concept of nature, the long predominant idea of the antithesis of technique and nature was rejected for the idea that technique can recreate nature. This is fundamental to Kant's aesthetics: The imagination "is very mighty when it creates, as it were, another nature out of the material that actual nature gives it."[48] Similarly in Schiller, who was the first in German letters unequivocally to take the side of the liberation of technique in art, one reads, "It is, then, not just poetic licence but philosophical truth when we call beauty our second creatress."[49] It would be possible to follow this idea of the rejection of the antithesis of nature and technique throughout modern German thought, and show its centrality to Marx and socialism as well as how this idea developed as a possible solution to natural history. History is not necessarily natural history if history can — in some fashion — transform nature as the production of a second nature. In Adorno's work, the possibility of an end to the dialectic of enlightenment depends precisely on the production of a second nature. Adorno makes this plain in a discussion of the division of labor and the alienation that is its result: "It is not the goal of a true society to destroy the division of labor and to revoke alienation, but rather to perfect the division of labor and thereby mollify suffering. The great philosophers have all known perfectly well that through alienation, through this return of the subject to itself by way of the social division of labor, an infinite amount of good has accrued to humanity."[50] Every formulation in the first excursus culminates in terms of this idea. Thus: "Marriage is indeed part of the mythical bedrock of civilization. But its mythical hardness and fixity emerges from myth like a small island from the infinite sea."[51] Or, again, property: "Although the fixed order of property, which is an aspect of settledness, is the basis of alienation from which all homesickness and all longing for a lost primordial condition originates, it is nevertheless at the same time only by way of settledness and fixed property that the concept of homeland develops."[52]

These reversals of marriage and property are only instances of the basic issue of the possible reversal of mediation with which *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is concerned: the reversal of subjectivity from the domination to the liberation of nature. Given Adorno's concept of domination as sacrifice, this reversal is necessarily formulated in theodical,

48. Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987) p. 182.
49. Schiller, *op. cit.*, p. 147.
50. "*Moralphilosophie*", *op. cit.*, p. 168.
51. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. 75 (translation modified).
52. *Ibid.*, p. 78 (translation modified).

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almost Christological terms of the overcoming of sacrifice through sacrifice: "Odysseus is at the same time a sacrifice for the abrogation of sacrifice. His masterful renunciation, as a struggle against myth, stands in for a society that no longer demands renunciation and domination: one that masters itself, not in order to coerce itself and others, but for reconciliation."[53] Self-sacrifice goes beyond itself because the self that is the internalization of sacrifice becomes the critique of sacrifice. The internalization of sacrifice is the establishment of the principle of identity as the principle of the self. This self-identical self can no longer be sacrificed because, as self-identical, it is inimitable and therefore cannot be substituted: "The self is precisely the human being to whom the magical power of substitution is no longer attributed. The establishment of the self severs that fluctuating unity with nature that the sacrifice of the self claimed to achieve."[54] The development of the principle of self-identity involves not only the rejection of human sacrifice but the origin of the standard for the critique of all sacrifice. Cunning emerges from sacrifice as reason, the idea of the free unity of the general and the particular, the principle of reconciliation: "Reason means, according to its own form, something like the idea of the reconciliation of the universal and the particular."[55]

Cunning goes beyond the sacrifice from which it emerged and becomes implicitly the critique of sacrifice. The "positive concept of enlightenment" elucidated in "The Concept of Enlightenment" is therefore not an invention of the essay but the dialectical development of the new out of the old: as the principle of identity, reason is in its origins the critique of the vitiation of the particular by the whole. This potential of reason, however, is limited by what made it possible: "The enmity of the self to sacrifice involved self-sacrifice because the price of this enmity was the denial of nature in men for the sake of domination over extra-human nature and over other men."[56] The inimitable self is beyond human sacrifice, but in the achievement of this non-substitutability the self becomes totally other than nature and its *telos* is lost: "In the instant in which men sever the consciousness of themselves as nature, all of the purposes for which they struggle to preserve themselves, social progress, the intensification of material and intellectual forces, indeed consciousness itself, are vitiated."[57] The principle of identity becomes the autarchic

53. *Ibid.*, p. 56 (translation modified).
54. *Ibid.*, p. 51 (translation modified).
55. *Moralphilosophie*, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
56. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. 54 (translation modified).
57. *Ibid.* (translation modified).

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reduction of the world to itself in order to control it. This nexus of identity becomes a second nature that appears as a context of absolute determinacy as all-encompassing as the nature that reason hoped to master. If freedom is embedded in nature by its distance from nature, in memory of itself as nature it would escape nature as a web of total determinacy: "Precisely reason that no longer takes itself to be absolute, that recognizes itself as nature and no longer as something absolutely opposed to nature, precisely this reason that is conscious of itself as nature, ceases to be mere nature."[58] The intention of the Odysseus essay — itself an act of organization and control — is the recovery of the *telos* of reason through memory of nature and is therefore the most emphatic effort of reason conceivable.

The Cunning of Art and the Memory of Nature

It is naive to say so, but there is no art without reason, e.g. no symphony orchestra without the invention of that ingenious axle that connects one or several keys on woodwinds;[59] Francis Bacon throws paint onto his canvases, but nothing would appear in these splashes without the technique that is brought to bear on them; anti-intellectualism characterizes more poets *manqués* than otherwise. And there would be no *Odyssey* without the mind of Odysseus: Adorno writes, "the venerable cosmos of the Homeric world, charged with meaning, reveals itself as the work of ordering reason."[60] The idea that art is "independent" from reason must be Habermas' own, because it cannot be found anywhere in Adorno. Adorno's aesthetics are a continuous reflection on the idea of the possible reversal of domination into liberation. The *Odyssey* is composed of mythical legends as an epic in which novelistic elements begin to appear, but this work of organization is not conjuration: "What epic and novel in fact have in common" is "domination and exploitation."[61] The Odysseus essay takes the side of this domination. And this defense of one of the first literary art works of the West develops as an affirmative study of the emergence of the novel — of prosaic narration — in opposition to mythical chant and legend.

Adorno develops his *parti pris* for the *Odyssey* as novel *vis à vis* various critics whom he names, but importantly also *vis à vis* one who goes unnamed: Benjamin, and the *völkish* organicism of his appreciation of

58. *Moralphilosophie*, *op. cit.*, p. 193.
59. See Adam Carse, *The History of Orchestration* (New York: Dover, 1964), p. 335.
60. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. 44 (translation modified).
61. *Ibid.*, p. 45 (translation modified).

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the story form in opposition to the novel in "The Storyteller." In this essay, Benjamin criticizes the novel by deriving from its dependence on the printing press the idea of a narrative form cut off from living speech. This new form, Benjamin claims, is occupied exclusively with the perplexity of the isolated individual and the incommensurability of the protagonist's experience. Every novel ends with the question of the meaning of life; and the only form of hope it offers is memory. The story form is opposed to all this: it is a work of living speech, a craft work of social solidarity; it is passed on from hand to hand, bearing the traces of all those who have held it; contrary to the perplexity of the novel's protagonist, the story form is sedimented wisdom and advice for living, for the linking together of one story with the next. A work of the people, it is part of the earth: the story form "resembles the seeds of grain which have lain for centuries . . . and retained their germinative power to this day."[62] This power is the ability to counter myth — the antagonistic relation of nature and humanity — by cunning. "The wisest thing . . . is to meet the forces of the mythical world with cunning and with high spirits." The story form learned this lesson from the archetypal storyteller, who, as Benjamin writes, pointed the way to the 'happily ever after' because he was a teller of fairy tales: "The first true storyteller is, and will continue to be, the teller of fairy tales."[63]

In the Odysseus essay, Adorno takes issue not only with Benjamin's undialectical theory of cunning — for Adorno, cunning is itself mythical — but most insistently he takes issue with Benjamin in the last line of the Odysseus essay. For Adorno, the "happily ever after" is not the work of the story, but of the novel: "Only by first becoming a novel does the epic become a fairy tale." This idea hinges on Adorno's theory of sacrifice. In art, domination is able to become liberation, the truth of the whole, because the same process of the domination of nature that society carries out occurs within the art work; the same sacrificial act of reason is carried out by art through its construction. The dialectic of enlightenment is the inner process of the art-work, and explicitly so in the Odysseus essay in which Odysseus appears as the allegorical figure of this process. However, whereas the sacrifices required by self-preservative reason in the actual domination of nature are silenced by the semblance of necessity woven by the principle of identity, art mourns the sacrifices it carries out. Art undoes its self-identity by the same process through which it

62. Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 90.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

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establishes its self-identity. This is the form of art's cunning: "Homer's story of Penelope, who every evening pulls apart what she wove during the day, is an unconscious allegory of art: what the cunning woman does to her artifacts is what art actually does to itself. Ever since Homer's poem, this episode is not what it is easily mistaken to be, an addition or vestige, but rather a constitutive category of art: through this category art absorbs the impossibility of the identity of the one and the many as an element of its unity. Art works, no less than reason, have their form of cunning."[64] Art works take themselves apart as they put themselves together and as they do so the progressive Hegelian dialectic is brought to a standstill in a moment of expression. Art becomes memory of nature in the mourning of its *caesuras*. This theory is presented in Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*; the Odysseus essay is the presentation of the experience of this *caesura*: After Odysseus' victory over the suitors, Telemachus — in the name of civilization — has the women who regressed to prostitution in his father's absence hung. Homer describes how their feet kicked, but "not for long." Adorno continues: "But after the 'not for long' the inner flow of the narrative comes to a halt. The gesture of the narrator. . . is that of a question: Not for long? By bringing the account to a halt, the gesture prevents the forgetting of the condemned and reveals the unnameable eternal torture of the second in which the maids struggled against death."[65] This *caesura* is art as its most cunning, a moment that Adorno's critics would presumably cast as "pessimistic." For Adorno, however, "by virtue of this *caesura* the semblance of freedom lights up, which ever since civilization has not succeeded in extinguishing." In the possibility of remembering what has happened, the coldness and *impassibilité* of the novel's narration reverses as memory of nature. This memory has two aspects: it contains not only what was undergone, but the possibility of the fairy tale's long ago and far away, which predicates the happily ever after. In reflection on this dialectic at a standstill, the necessity — *pace* Habermas — of the world's daring-do dissolves, and enlightenment comes to terms as the consciousness of the uselessness of sacrifice. In this consciousness, reason recovers its *telos*. Here Adorno, whose maxim was to lose arguments in such a way as to convict the other side of its mistakenness, would want Habermas to have the last word of his

64. *Aesthetic Theory*, new translation by Robert Hullot-Kentor (in preparation); *Aesthetische Theorie*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann and Gretl Adorno (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971), p. 278.

65. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. 79 (translation modified).

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opponents' idea of enlightenment. Thus Habermas: "How can these two men of the Enlightenment (which they both remain) be so unappreciative of the rational content of cultural modernity that all they perceive everywhere is a binding of reason and domination?"[66]

Dialectic of Enlightenment: *Critique of the Translation*

For those who grew up with the English edition of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and thought they knew what was in it, it may come as hard news to learn that the words of this text are the wrong ones. Some examples from the second excursus of the volume, "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment" will produce a needed suspicion about the translation as a whole. There are, however, two drawbacks to this catalogue of mistranslations. The first is that it may give the impression that there is nothing right about Cumming's translation. This is not the case. Much of it is good, and at a couple of points it even improves on the original. The second drawback to this *corrigenda* is that it hardly makes compelling reading. However, there is no other way to document the translation's inadequacy other than by pushing a sort of attentiveness farther than anyone might want to read.

Focusing, then, on what is wrong with the translation, taking sentences by the handful, here is what one comes up with: The first phrase of the essay, "As we have seen"[67] — though a seemingly convenient bridge from the lead essay, "The Concept of Enlightenment" — does not occur in the original, or for that matter, anywhere in Adorno's writings. The book is only able to organize adequately its complexity because of its paratactical structure, which eschews all such bridges. Though this particular translator's interpolation does not block comprehension, it implies a general misunderstanding of the text; and in the face of the book's intricacies, this misunderstanding consistently catches sentences going the wrong direction. Thus, for example: Adorno did write — as the translation has it — that "through laughter blind nature becomes *aware*[68] of itself." But he could not have written — as the translation continues — that, as a result of this self-consciousness, nature "thereby *surrenders itself to the powers of destruction*."[69] If reflection were the catalyst

66. Habermas, "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Horkheimer and Adorno," in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. by F. Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), p. 121.
67. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
68. "Conscious" would be better here.
69. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

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of destructiveness, the whole of Adorno's thought would be senseless. Adorno in fact wrote the opposite: in the self-consciousness of its laughter blind nature "*gives up its destructive force*." The translation is full of similar misconstruals: In the context of a discussion of marriage, Cumming has it that "the wife *denotes pleasure* in the fixed order of life and property."[70] According to the original, the wife "*betrays pleasure*." In the discussion of the Circe episode, the sorceress for some reason conjures not with "wine and *herbs*" but "wine and *cabbage*."[71] Odysseus is not the man "for whom all *reasonable things are alike*,"[72] but the man "whom *all rational thinkers once resembled*." Magic does not use "the fixed order of time to attack the fixed will of the subject;"[73] rather, "along with the fixed order of time, this power [magic] seizes the fixed will of the subject." Polyphemous does not trust "in the power of *immortality*," but in the "power of *immortals*," the Olympian gods.[74] Adorno's essay is a study of the origin of the epic as form. The epic develops as it organizes the tribal, mythical legends into one coherent narrative of adventure; according to the existing translation, the *Odyssey* pulls "myth into time," thus "*concealing* the abyss that separates it [myth] from homeland and reconciliation."[75] But this is once more a reversal of the sense of the passage: In the original the abyss is not concealed but "*revealed*" — a reversal of sense that threatens to unhinge the whole of Adorno's discussion of the relation of epic to myth.

Cumming's single most important failing, however, is his translation throughout of *Vertretung* and its derivatives as "representation" rather than "substitution." Choosing between the two English terms is not simple; "representation" is correct but misleading. It is only possible to get the sense of the essay by beginning from "substitution." This can best be shown by comparing two versions of a crucial passage which at the same time will give an idea of what even the most diligent reader is up against in the current translation: "Just as the capacity of *representation* is the measure of domination, and domination is the most powerful thing that can be represented in most performances, so the capacity of *representation* is the vehicle of progress and regression at one and the same time."[76] Compare this: "Just as *substitutability* is the measure

70. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

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of domination, and that person is most powerful who can have others *substitute* for him or her in the majority of tasks, so *substitution* is at once the vehicle of progress and regression." In this passage Adorno and Horkheimer begin to reconceive the commonplace that domination is the power to have others do one's own work; they reformulate this idea as part of the history of sacrifice in which an object of lesser value is cunningly *substituted* for another of greater value. The misunderstanding of this concept and the theory of sacrifice of which it is part has far-reaching consequences, producing distortions and blind spots throughout Cumming's translation. Thus, for example, one reads that "*The mythic folk religions* must have been shown to be illusory long before they acquired a civilized form."[77] But it turns out that it is the *rationality of sacrifice* that "must have shown itself to be illusory long before the development of the mythical folk religions." All such mistranslations must be sorted out before any real discussion of this pivotal text of Critical Theory can proceed in the English-speaking world.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

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The Other "Global Warming": The Impact of Perestroika *on the US*

Tim Luke

The conventional wisdom in Washington is that the Cold War is "over," and the US has definitely "won."[1] Among other things, what this means is that the global project of containment that has anchored American politics since 1947 is now obsolete.[2] Gorbachev's willingness to restructure Moscow's relations with Western Europe, the US, and Eastern Europe has already transformed the diplomatic landscape. The following discussion assumes that *perestroika* will continue and that Western nations will accept it as a decisive break with the past. In that case, virtually all bets about existing power relations are off. If the US is to survive as a superpower, it also needs a *perestroika*. Today many of the mechanisms Washington fabricated to deal with geopolitical realities after WWII are sputtering into obsolescence.[3]

Perestroika *and Global Political Change*

In the post-WWII years, up to the 1960s, the US produced almost

1. As *The Wall Street Journal* observes about the Reagan years, "America has matched the Soviets militarily, bested them ideologically and buried them economically, forcing Moscow to focus on internal overhaul if it is even to remain in the great-power race" (January 23, 1989), p. A1.

2. See Simon Dalby, "Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other," *Alternatives*, vol. XIII, no. 4 (October, 1988), p. 415-42.

3. For a more detailed discussion of the major mechanism of "extended deterrence," see Mike Davis, "Nuclear Imperialism and Extended Deterrence," *Exterminism and Cold War* (London: New Left Books, 1982); and John Newhouse, *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), pp. 93-146.

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50% of the gross national product of the world's market economies. Its overwhelming power resulted from the Pentagon's military might, the Bretton Woods Conference, Detroit's mass production, and control of world oil supplies by the "seven sisters." By the Carter years, however, these foundations of *Pax Americana* were shaken.[4] The Pentagon stumbled into defeat in Vietnam and Cambodia. The USSR attained rough nuclear parity, which SALT I ratified as acceptable to Washington. Japan and West Germany began outstripping American industry. OPEC took a fair measure of control over the global oil trade without much American resistance. Finally, the US junked the fixed exchange rates of Bretton Woods for a new regime of floating rates determined by international money markets rather than the US Federal Reserve System and Department of the Treasury.

Despite these developments, the US managed to maintain its superpower status and hold the Western bloc together by means of the Soviet "threat." To impose its own agenda or win concessions from its allies, the US could always cite its global role of containing communism. Since the collapse of Bretton Woods and the rise of OPEC in the early 1970s, however, the US position has been threatened more by global economic fragmentation than by the Soviet Union. Washington's efforts to curb these tendencies, in part by manipulating collective fears about the USSR, are now threatened by *perestroika* as the frictions between three loosely organized regional blocs are gradually increasing.[5] The first bloc pivots on the US, which accounted for 26% of the global GNP in 1987. Through its "North American common market," programs with Canada and Mexico, as well as its Caribbean Basin initiatives, the US is pulling the Western Hemisphere closer into its orbit. In addition, it maintains critical economic ties to its military dependencies in Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan and South Korea. No longer the money bags of the world, most American foreign aid now goes mainly to these client states. In the late 1980s, American foreign aid is only about .3%of GNP versus 2.5% in 1947 or nearly 1% in 1960.

Second, while the US participates prominently in the Pacific Basin, another economic bloc developing there is tied to Japan (which by itself generated 9.4% of the global the GNP in 1987) and its major Pacific

4. Charles William Maynes, "Coping with the '90s," *Foreign Policy* 74 (Spring 1989), p. 55.

5. Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 397-401. Also see Walter Russell Mead, "The United States and the World Economy: from Bretton Woods to the Bush Team," *World Policy Journal*, vol. VI, no. 2 (Winter 1988-1989), p. 1-46.

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trading partners. Beyond its close neighbors, the reach of Japan's financial clout is expanding all over the Third World, and its foreign assistance efforts have surpassed America's aid programs during the 1980s. As the 1990s approach, Japan already has in place an immense $30 billion program begun in 1987 to aid debt-strapped Third World nations. It announced a new $35 billion initiative to run through 1991 at the 1989 Paris summit. Given its $77 billion trade surplus in 1988 and $80 billion surplus in 1987, only Japan has the capital to fund development in the Second and Third World. Most importantly, Japan's growing trade with China, the Soviet Union, North Vietnam, and North Korea is also becoming a significant component in this regional bloc.

Third, the European Community, producing 22.2% of the global GNP in 1987, is drawing its members, the peripheral European states, some Middle Eastern/Mediterranean nations, the Eastern Bloc, and many old European colonies in Africa into another regional bloc. The most formally unified of all, the European Community also has the most to gain from *perestroika* inasmuch as it opens up access to tremendous new markets and resources right on its doorstep. Similar opportunities exist for the Pacific Basin bloc in Siberia, but the sparse population there does not offer the same mass markets as in Eastern Europe and the Western Soviet Union. Orbiting outside these three major capitalist centers are the still isolated economies of the USSR, China, and the East European states, respectively producing 13.9%, 1.7%, and 5.3% of global GNP in 1987.

Perestroika's prospects for success in the USSR mean a great deal for the US, namely, an immensely diminished role on the world stage. American troop commitments in Western Europe, South Korea, and Southeast Asia as well as the US Navy's formidable presence on numerous duty stations off many Third World nations have been mobilized and legitimated almost exclusively on the pretext of resisting Soviet totalitarianism. Without this specter haunting the world, the entire post-1945 system of containment will gradually grind to a stop. Just as the demise of the Maoist threat practically led to the toppling of SEATO, the crumbling of neo-Stalinism now threatens to tumble Washington's NATO-based hegemony in Europe into irrelevance. At the same time, the possibilities of developing divisive inter-bloc competition increase exponentially, particularly if the USSR selectively plays off the different blocs against each other or if they begin to quarrel over which one will have prominence for integrating separate pieces of the USSR's empire more fully into the capitalist world.

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The major challenge facing the US in the 1990s is how to reconstruct its international political economy beyond the limits of "extended deterrence." Even without the Soviet threat, the existing trade ties of the last four decades between the US and Japan will probably pull them even closer together, turning the Pacific Basin's market into an even bigger entity. Faced by a unified European Community, an expanding Chinese market, and restructuring Soviet economy, this greater unity would make immense sense in both Washington and Tokyo as they expand their coaligned spheres of control. Unless short-sighted domestic pressure groups force Washington to sour its ties with Tokyo, *perestroika* will most likely keep pushing the US toward Asia rather than resting its strategies solely on the Atlantic alliance.

As the center of gravity in the world economy moves from the Atlantic to the Pacific Basin, America's problems in the North Atlantic region are also likely to mount. The new unity being forged within the European Community by 1992 will be increasingly opposed not only to the Soviet Union but also to the US.[6] Beyond elaborating the 1983 Reagan policy of "differentiation," i.e., rewarding East European countries to the extent that they carry out economic experiments and democratic reforms independent of Moscow, Bush has no long-range agenda for Western or Eastern Europe. Although the May meetings in Belgium and West Germany quieted dissent over Washington's plans for its new short-range nuclear forces, it produced no new vision of East-West relations.

Perestroika's *Domestic Impact in the US*

Georgi Arbatov, director of the Institute for the Study of the USA and Canada, has stated that: "We are going to do something terrible to you — we are going to dèprive you of an enemy."[7] This is perhaps

6. Secretary of State Baker ran afoul of this development during his initial "agenda-setting trip" to Europe in February 1989. In talking with the leaders of the EC nations, he discovered a radical shift in "threat perception" all across Europe. He identified it as "a sharp reduction in the sense of danger from across the Iron Curtain that has been a fact of life throughout the post-World War II era and that undergirded the creation and continued support of the powerful military apparatus of the Atlantic alliance." Without that threat perhaps there is no longer any need for the continuation of the NATO alliance. In addition, Baker discovered that the tremendous and irreversible momentum toward European economic integration in 1992 is moving most European concerns from security to economics. In light of the relative decline in American economic power, Baker saw "issues between the United States and Europe are likely to become more contentious and recognition of US leadership less automatic," *The Washington Post* (February 20, 1989), p. A30.

7. Cited in Charles E. Nathanson, "The Social Construction of the Soviet Threat:

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perestroika's most radical and daring strike against the US. It raises vital questions about the military Keynesianism underpinning America's political economy, the legitimacy of the managerial state and the bankruptcy of the Republican and Democratic parties.

Without the security once provided by the Soviet threat, decision-makers in Washington now must face major questions about industrial policy, fiscal policy, and technological development.[8] For nearly 40 years, the strategic weapons research and development process has constituted the nearest thing to a comprehensive industrial policy. During the Reagan years, military research consumed almost 65% of the entire federal budget for research and development. Much of this military spending has been wasted on systems that will not work as planned or do not work at all, leaving behind weapons that are unusable, complex and expensive. One need look at only one program to how see this process works: the B-2 "Stealth" bomber program.

At $500 to $600 million each, the B-2 does not have a definite military objective. As the successor to the B-52 and B-1B, it allegedly was designed to penetrate Soviet air defenses in the 1990s and early 21st century through its radar-evading properties. After Mathias Rust demonstrated that even a Cessna might fly undetected from Western Europe into Red Square, improvements in Soviet anti-aircraft systems will probably make most fixed hard targets in the USSR defensible against even the B-2. Thus the Pentagon is scrambling to defend the B-2 as the perfect weapon for chasing around Soviet mobile missiles or attacking Third World dictators. Yet the former mission would require increasing the number of American spy satellites by 10-30 fold, and the latter has been likened to sending a Rolls Royce into downtown Beirut to pick up a loaf of bread.

In keeping with the Eisenhower and Nixon strategy of using hi-tech rearmament programs as a politically acceptable form of industrial policy, the Reagan and Bush administrations have continued to push hard for the B-2s's deployment because of its implications for the declining American economy. Reagan launched a one trillion dollar-plus initiative in the 1980s to restart the stagflated economy of the late 1970s and reposition American technical innovation for leadership in the 1990s. Given the on-going erosion of the competitive sector (steel,

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A Study in the Politics of Representation," *Alternatives*, vol. XIII, no. 4 (October 1988), p. 443.

8. See Paul Piccone and Victor Zaslavsky, "The Socio-Economic Roots of Rearmament," *Telos* 50 (Winter 1981-82), pp. 5-18, 44

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textiles, automobiles, and consumer goods), by global competition, this boost to the monopoly sector (aircraft, electronics, computers, and composite materials), *was* essential for the US to even maintain its current status. Despite immense waste and technological shortfalls, military Keynesianism "worked" inasmuch as it shored up America's sagging economy sufficiently to regain export markets lost in the 1970s.

The B-2 program is one of the Bush administration's key ingredients for extending this macroeconomic recipe into the 1990s. At today's projected but understated costs of $70 billion, the B-2 is an immense public works program, involving contractors in 46 out of the 50 states. Thousands of jobs in direct work on the bomber system and many thousands more in indirect multiplier chains are tied to this effort, giving Washington the ability to set technological priorities, allocate economic resources, and direct industrial production at home in response to America's foreign competitors. This impact is far from negligible. Northrop and its subcontractors already have had to invent over 900 new materials, processes and technologies to build this bomber. The computerized design and materials set-up of new composites used in the B-2, to take only two examples, are changing how all aircraft will be built in the future. By these somewhat unconventional means, then, the Pentagon is "defending" the US. The defense, however, is directed not against the vague threat of some future Soviet attack, but rather against the very real incursions of Japanese and European manufacturers on one of America's few remaining patches of economic and technological superiority.

While the B-2 constitutes only one, albeit "big-ticket" and "showy," piece of the Pentagon's industrial policy puzzle, it illustrates the significance of the GOP's rearmament programs in the struggle to maintain US economic, military and technological hegemony in the 1990s and beyond. The Gorbachev phenomenon in the USSR, however, robs this entire system of its *raison d'etre*. In the aftermath of Sputnik, the bomber gap, and the missile gap in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Washington mobilized the technical talent of American corporations and universities to work on "national security" problems, pulling the best minds away from the civilian sector. Although technologies with a military component, like computers, aircraft, electronics or nuclear energy, remained competitive internationally, the mass production mainsprings of America's traditional economic power, like consumer products, industrial producer goods, automotive production, and infrastructure output, soon began to lag. In addition to shouldering the

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tremendous costs of its military build-up, the US consciously opened its markets to foreign imports while promoting the exports of jobs and capital abroad to stimulate economic development.

The prevailing diplomatic frameworks of containment theory, beginning with the Marshall Plan, attributed the spread of communism to poverty and unemployment. Washington reasoned if it could provide jobs in developing countries by opening American markets to cheap imports and nurturing off-shore production in these unstable places, then it would strike a blow against Soviet expansion. At the same time, however, these policies took low-wage, low-tech jobs out of the US and placed many marginal American firms in competition with foreign producers. Such policies led, in turn, to a deterioration in American living standards for the traditional working and middle classes as this "hollowing out" of the domestic economy bolstered off-shore production in Cold War flashpoints. Average American household income in 1989 was considerably lower in constant dollars than in 1973 or 1967, and a tremendous trade deficit tied to consumer goods and energy resources has upset American domestic accounts every year since 1971. With fewer Third World trouble spots to contend with, Washington and the international currency markets have been promoting a return of industrial plants to the US that is slowly improving its productive potential.

Lastly, the immense costs of transnationalizing the American economy are increasingly showing up in environmental degradation. Third World nations, seeking to avoid communist revolutions, have not only sacrificed their workers' well-being in the factory but have given *carte blanche* to transnational commerce "to develop their natural resources." To provide jobs, cheap resources, and increasing profits as protection against Marxist revolutions, rainforests, farmland, mineral deposits, fisheries, and beautiful landscapes have been sacrificed with Washington's approval to the new forms of transnational commerce organized in Western Europe, Japan, and North America. Transnational business and indigenous Third World elites continue to exploit these opportunities by taking their self-interested advantage of Washington's struggle to contain Marxist revolutions in the Third World, but a sense of lessened tension between East and West is renewing interest in limiting economic growth for environmental reasons.

Once military Keynesianism falters, the legitimacy of the managerial state entrusted with its administration also comes into question. One of the enduring fictions of American electoral politics, particularly among

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many rank-and-file Democrats, is precisely this myth of the managerial state, best embodied in the policies of the New Deal. This political fable suggests that FDR's social and economic program of managerial interventionism rescued the nation from going under completely after it was set adrift by Hoover's and Coolidge's *laissez-faire*, market-centered, macroeconomic policies. In fact, the New Deal experiments were largely a failure. It was the economic stimuli and social purpose provided by the US entry into WWII which led to an unprecedented increase in employment, productivity and growth that ended the Great Depression of the 1930s and made Washington the political center of the post-war Western world.

In the crucible of WWII, the social interventionism of the New Deal and the military Keynesianism of the Arsenal of Democracy fused into the administrative regime of Cold War internationalism and post-New Deal liberalism, which jointly underpinned the era of containment. After the abrogation of England and France as great powers, and the consolidation of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe, the Truman administration turned the massive bureaucracies of the American welfare/warfare state — between 1933 and 1947 — into the central instrument of a new struggle against Stalinist totalitarianism. The Cold War enabled the American managerial state to reconstruct the entire post-war world and much of its own domestic economy and society around the central premise of containment.

Perestroika explodes the rationale anchoring the managerial state's direction of American economy and society. Like the communist parties in Eastern Europe and the USSR, the old-line, authoritarian bureaucracies of the American managerial state seem to be losing their purpose in today's evolving global economy. These organizations were constructed originally to manage the transition from extensive to intensive modes of industrial growth, to organize a single national economic system out of many smaller, almost semi-autonomous, sectional systems, and to mollify class, racial, sectional and ethnic antagonisms with a steady flow of new entitlements delivered to individuals and communities as professionally produced state services. Most of these original goals were attained by the early 1970s. The managerial state has lived on after their attainment, providing a purpose for itself in constant crisis management and maintaining a political home for New Class social forces who staff and sustain its managerial missions. While the New Class once had a clear purpose in the deployment of the managerial state, both now tend to serve their own agendas. Although statist relations of production have

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become a fetter on the future development of the present transnational means of production, the managerial state and its New Class administrative elites have even survived Reaganism.

The whole notion of statist redistribution that underlies both Soviet socialism in the USSR and managerial statism in the US appears even more bankrupt in the era of *perestroika*. Whereas New Class intellectuals once could dream of attaining command over resources and authority to remake society in accord with some secular plan of intellectual utopianism, this model has been discredited by the failure of socialism. Given the depoliticization of the past four decades, this crisis of the managerial state will most likely lead nowhere, but it could mean new assaults on corporate power by a new decentralized, localist politics. Similar challenges from below were emerging during the hey-day of detènte in the 1960s and 1970s. Beyond their superficial cooptation as artificial negativity, however, they were defeated by the political agendas of the ideological Right, corporate power, and conservative national security intellectuals during the Carter administration.[9]

After America's disengagement from Vietnam, many expected an immense "peace dividend." These hopes soon proved to be misplaced in the stagflation of the 1970s. By the same token, reduced military spending in the 1990s will not necessarily lead to improved social conditions. At best it may reduce the size of growing federal budget deficits. Although the Bush administration fails to see this obvious implication, dismantling some of the Reagan era's military programs in the wake of *perestroika* promises to free tremendous technological and economic resources for further capitalist expansion. Even so, given Bush's confused style of government, few believe that existing federal bureaucracies are up to the task.

With the opportunity to restructure federal spending and rationally invest public resources in critical areas, like housing, transportation, energy production, industrial modernization or environmental protection, the US has an opportunity to initiate further social rationalization that could rival the New Deal in scope and impact. This social transformation, however, must follow new models that go far beyond the contradictions of centralized social planning by bureaucratic experts. Unless they find new forms of democratic populism to ground their vision for this opportunity, the Democrats' political slate, which usually embraces the managerial state as their most preferred method

9. See Tim Luke, "Culture and Politics in the Age of Artificial Negativity," *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 55-72.

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of rule, will continue to finish behind candidates espousing free-market philosophies. The managerial state is dead, but the ideas outlining alternatives to it are not yet born.

Perestroika weakens the sting of the Republican Party's claim that the Democrats are soft-headed fellow-travelers. If the Cold War is over and communism has been defeated, then the divisive social contradictions and progressive ideological conflicts that containment-era domestic politics have masked could make a real comeback from the marginal fringes of American political life. Political conflict over virtually every significant public issue will be the new reality in all levels of government in the 1990s. Still, the combination of these challenges and their connection to the Cold War continues to evade most Republican and Democratic appraisals of the current world and domestic scenes. Beyond facing the still politically undefined threat from Japan, there is no real agenda in the Republican or Democratic parties for anticipating or directing the course of America's future modernization.

Under Bush, the GOP has elected "to stay the course" laid down by eight years of Reagan's military Keynesianism. Most Democrats' vision is not much better. There is a vague feeling that the peace now attending the end of the Cold War offers them an opportunity to dismantle some of the most militarized aspects of the American economy. Shifting resources to new battlefronts of economic competitiveness, however, will be very difficult given the immense military research organizations and industrial development networks the Pentagon has erected from coast to coast. Not only is the future of peace on the line, so are the economic interests of many large corporate and university contractors now hooked onto the Defense Department gravy train. By shifting into "peace production," the Democrats would begin to rebuild America's decaying urban and rural infrastructures, to redirect technological innovation into producer and consumer goods production to compete with the Japanese, and to revitalize the material standards of living for the unemployed and underemployed. But they do not recognize how these problems extend beyond questions of purchasing or foregoing new weaponry. Any increase in net social surpluses realized from savings on military spending and growing non-military production will lead to renewed sectional, class, and interest group conflict, as was partly true in the early 1970s with the advent of detènte. Again, the lack of the Soviet threat to provide an excuse for artificial scarcities, postponing important social investments and accepting distasteful policies could reanimate new populist mobilizations (like Jesse Jackson's

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Rainbow Coalition) against the prevailing order, making it necessary to contain or coopt these threats. So far, Bush has been buying time in the media with his declarations of new "hot wars" against Colombian drug lords and homegrown flag-burning dissidents. But his regressive tax reform programs, mismanagement of the financial and banking systems, and unrealistic military spending programs are also sparking popular resistance.

Ironically, the advent of *perestroika* also undercuts the logic of America's traditional progressive opposition, with its essentially statist programs for managing social change. *Perestroika* openly admits to the bankruptcy of centralized, bureaucratic planning and administration by government experts. Yet to correct the flaws in global transnational capitalism and the tottering New Deal/Great Society welfare states, which Nixonian and Reaganite conservatism merely streamlined rather than eliminated, Left liberals still believe the centralized system of bureaucratic statism is the solution. One need only look at the reindustrialization programs and international competitiveness schemes of neoliberal thinkers to find this faith alive and well.[10] At the very juncture at which dramatically "new ideas" are really needed, the opposition can only trundle out watered-down versions of the same managerial thinking that has forced the USSR into Chapter 11.

The frozen wasteland of American political discourse, with its rigid "liberal" versus "conservative" divisions set in the issues of the Cold War, will eventually thaw and reveal a new political landscape. If *perestroika* spreads to the US, then the Cold War regime of military Keynesianism, bipartisan foreign policy, and managerial statism will be forced into its own restructuring.

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10. See, for example, James Fallows, *More Like Us: Making American Great Again* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989); Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rodgers, *Right Turn: The Decline of the Democrats and the Future of American Politics* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986); Bennett Harrison and Barry Bluestone, *The Great U-Turn: Corporate Restructuring and the Polarizing of America* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); and Robert Reich, *The Next American Frontier* (New York: Times Books, 1983).

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Avoiding the East European Question

Miron Wolnicki

The proposed American economic aid package to Poland has been merely symbolic. Clearly, Bush does not want to raise expectations about American economic commitments. But there is another reason. Though ideologically rewarding, the passing away of Communism in Eastern Europe breaks an old link between geopolitics and macroeconomics. To support non-Communist governments in Poland and Hungary means dealing with a diluted Warsaw Pact and losing the specter of the Soviet threat as an effective means to prop up aggregate domestic demand by means of military Keynsianism.[1] That is why Washington may look upon *perestroika* more as a liability than an asset. For almost a decade the Polish military coup, prosecution of the opposition, and acute food shortages, allowed the depiction of "existing socialism" as morally deficient and provided the most convincing reassurance of American moral superiority. The unexpected rebirth of Solidarity and the coming into being of a non-communist government in Warsaw rendered the Polish museum of communist decay obsolete and paved the way for a capitalist success story. For the time being, Washington seems reluctant to help the Mazowiecki government, presumably on the grounds that American eagerness would be too embarrassing for Gorbachev and too annoying for his conservative opponents. This, however, is not a test of Soviet tolerance but of American ability to cope with winning the Cold War.

During the June Paris Summit, Bush supported "Europeanization" of Polish aid, leaving its coordination to the European Commission.[2]

1. "Introduction to: '*Perestroika* in Eastern Europe'," *Telos* 79 (Spring 1989), p. 3.
2. Robert D. Hormats, "Redefining Europe and the Atlantic Link," *Foreign Affairs*, no. 4 (Fall 1989), p. 82.

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The shift of focus away from Washington cannot be explained in terms of caution, budgetary constraints, or the domestic opposition of Jesse Helms (who brands Solidarity as a bunch of Marxists).[3] Despite apparent pleasure with the demise of the Soviet empire, the Administration wants to avoid the shocks that the end of the Cold War entails. Specifically, the US does not want to see NATO vanish, the Rhine Army back home and the defense budget cut. Since business follows the flag, there is strong reluctance on the part of Western capitalists to invest in the East, relax restrictions on exporting new technologies, and, on the Atlantic side, to accept increased Common Market and West German stakes in the area.[4]

Readily picked up by Democrats in Congress, the view that the Cold War is ending has placed the White House on the defensive, primarily because of growing criticism of the President's handling of relations with Moscow. In fact, it prompted the State Department to revise the amounts of food assistance to Poland three times in September alone, but not enough to lead to policy revisions.[5] Here the Administration's concern with the fallout of *perestroika* is compounded by budgetary constraints on Congress, which is handcuffed by the sequestration threat of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Bill. Meanwhile, essential executive decisions to support IMF and World Bank loans and reopen the Paris Club (government lenders) negotiations give way to the fear of disrupting the *status quo*.

Linking Western and Eastern Europe Through Germany

Today, the re-linking of Poland and Hungary to Western Europe must be analyzed in the context of Washington's avoidance of geopolitical

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3. "Interview with Jesse Helms's Assistant," in *Nowy Dziennik*, 67 (September 25, 1989), p. 5.

4. In a speech at Georgetown University that clearly reflected the Administration's thinking, Deputy Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger said, "The process of reform in the Soviet bloc and relaxation of the Soviet control over Eastern Europe are bringing long-suppressed ethnic antagonisms and national rivalries to the surface, and putting the German question back on the international agenda." And later he added: "For all its risks and uncertainties the Cold War was characterized by a remarkably stable and predictable set of relations among the great powers." *The New York Times* (September 16), p. 6.

5. A painstaking Congressional approval of $120 million or even $900 million (proposed by Democratic Senators Cranston, Pell, Simon and others) does not make economic aid more meaningful, but it does make it more visible. The Polish assistance bill must compete with timely appropriations for an anti-drug program, education, Savings and Loans crises and natural disasters.

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shocks, German reunification, and the Common Market's protectionism.[6] Minc argues that the Common Market's preoccupation with unification and competition between France and Germany make Eastern Europe peripheral to the Community's interests. Pivotal to his arguments is the claim that West Germany, a foremost European economic power, is losing interest in Atlantic Europe and will try to turn Eastern Europe into a client *Mitteleuropa*, against the interests of all other Common Market members.[7] Let us consider some facts:

In the 1980s West Germany regained its prewar position as the main supplier of technology and capital to all of Central Europe.[8] Bonn was successful in swapping subsidies and bank loans for commitments to ease the lot of 17 million East Germans and soften border restrictions. To achieve this, it deliberately subsidized trade with East Germany.[9] West German loans also assured the continuation of liberal reforms in Hungary, and the granting of exit visas to thousands of ethnic Germans in Rumania.

Warsaw and Bonn have been negotiating economic support for months. Prime Minister Rakowski, who earlier this year made major concessions to West Germany, particularly over cultural rights of its ethnic German minority, deluded himself about the financial compensation he thought West Germany was prepared to pay (forgiveness and "zlotyzation" of the one billion Mark "Jumbo Credit" granted by Chancellor Schmidt in 1975).[10] He trimmed his demands, but not enough for the hard-line West German Right which, after years of keeping under

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6. Angela Stent, "The Soviet Union and Western Europe: Divided Continent or Common House?," *The Harriman Institute Forum*, vol. 2, no. 9 (September 1989). p. 1.

7. Alain Minc, *Le Grande Illusion* (Paris: Bertrand Grasset, 1989).

8. Until 1918, Germany and Czechoslovakia, as part of the post-*Mitteleuropa* system, supplied superior German technology and capital to Central Europe in exchange for raw materials and agricultural products. Today, West German chemical companies buy large quantities of bulk chemicals from East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary for a value-added Common Market re-export. The Polish textile industry supplies about one-fifth of German clothing. At the same time, Bonn has become the largest technology exporter to East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Yugoslavia. See Olin Wethington, "East-West Trade: A Commerce Department Perspective," in Angela Stent, ed., *Economic Relations with the Soviet Union: American and West German Perspective* (Boulder CO: Westview Special Studies, 1985), p. 125.

9. Thus West Germany decided to send large amounts of crude oil to East Germany for refining and took it back at three times the price at which it was sold, even though there is much unused refining capacity in West Germany. See *The New Yorker* (December 26, 1988), p. 89 and William V. Wallace and Roger A. Clarke, *Comecon Trade and the West* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1986), p. 23.

10. Archie Triomphe, "Hoffnung für Polen," *Die Zeit* (July 21,1989) and "Hilfe für Polen," *Die Zeit* (July 7, 1989).

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wraps its opposition to Genscher's policy towards the Eastern bloc, is now suddenly rediscovering a crusading spirit.[11] Though Genscher has responded sharply to pre-election attacks on the coalition and has made frequent visits to Paris, Franco-German initiative on behalf of the Mazowiecki government is flagging. Although Kohl, Mitterrand, Delors and Dumas have frequently declared support for a coordinated policy towards Poland, they have had little effect on the Common Market Commission.

Throughout the 1980s traditional Common Marketeers sought economic protectionism and cultural cohesion against all outsiders — including Americans and, until recently, Eastern Europeans. Despite paramount opposition to Common Market regionalism by Italian financiers[12] and members of the West German SPD, many British Labor Party Common Marketeers regard Eastern Europe as a source of East-West instability and, at best, outside mainstream European concerns.[13] The SPD and the Labor Party hold that the Soviet Union and Western Europe can readily resolve most of their ideological and political differences. Western Europe should loosen its military and other links to the US — an abnormal legacy of WWII — while "Europeanizing" Western Europe's security and relations with the Soviet Union.[14]

The French Common Marketeers kept a low profile in Eastern Europe for most of the 1980s. France has no borders with Eastern Europe, no outstanding bilateral problems, and no significant trade ties with the area. In the mid-1980s, France found itself behind Britain and Italy in trade with the Soviet bloc. Now, with the possible expansion of East-West trade, French officials have publicly expressed fears that West Germany might "go it alone" in Eastern Europe and strike deals

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11. The conservative Right has a strategically placed ally in the Federal Finance Minister, Theo Weigel. As a head of the Social Christian Union (CSU), the Bavarian counterpart of Chancellor Kohl's Christian Democratic Union, he is a key figure in the ruling coalition. Weigel has up to now been seen as a rather flexible member of the coalition. However, after winning 14.6% of the vote in the recent European election, the far-right and Weigel's CSU are moving away from Kohl. Not content with opposing the granting of substantial aid to Poland, Weigel, at the meeting of the Silesian Refugees Association, claimed that "The German territories in the East on the other side of the Oder and Neisse are part of the German question" and "The German Empire did not perish with the capitulation of 1945." See Henri de Bresson and Claire Trean, "New German Line on Poland" *The Manchester Guardian* 2 (July 16, 1989), p. 15.

12. Giovanni Agnelli, "The Europe of 1992," *Foreign Affairs*, no. 4 (Fall 1989), p. 61.

13. Karen Davisha, *Eastern Europe, Gorbachev and Reform: The Great Challenge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 202.

14. Heintz Stadlmann, "Marshallplan für Polen?," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 204 (September 4, 1989), p. 9.

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dictated solely by German interests. That is why, on a visit to Paris in January 1987, Kohl openly invited France to join West Germany in shaping a joint *Ostpolitik*. In the 1980s, whenever Paris has shown interest in Eastern Europe, it has been generally concerned with containing the influence of West Germany and the Soviet Union. Relations with Rumania — traditionally France's largest partner in Eastern Europe — have deteriorated as a result of Ceausescu's autocratic policies. Trade with Bucharest has declined, and, as a result, Hungary has replaced Rumania as France's preferred partner in Eastern Europe. Recent events in Poland have paved the way for Mitterrand to talk on behalf of democratic change and economic support so that Paris may regain the privileged position it had in Eastern Europe during DeGaulle's presidency. This may be done by means of the Common Market, where France's foreign minister Delors will hold the rotating chairmanship for the next three years.

Atlanticists view Eastern Europe as secondary to overall relations with the Soviet Union. Accordingly, NATO's unity and its defense must be preserved even as relations with the Soviets improve, since today the long-term outlook for Gorbachev's foreign policy is unclear. Thus, if the Atlanticists have any commercial interest in the East, it is in terms of trade with the vast, reconstructed Soviet market. Under favorable conditions, Britain would be ready to reinvigorate its slumping economy by securing access to this market, even if it meant forgetting what is happening in the center of the continent.[15] Consequently, Thatcher is opposed to the rescheduling of Polish debts under the Paris Club agreement and sees a leverage on the Mazowiecki government as well justified. Britain, the second largest IMF contributor after the US, is against the proposed rise in the organization's reserve (to double the present $120 billions) to increase loans to Eastern Europe. Like Rohatyn, British conservatives want to limit economic assistance to Poland to humanitarian help, while coordinating Western actions with Moscow.[16]

Thatcher's visits to Budapest (1984) and Poland (1988) were designed more to confirm Britain's diplomatic presence in Eastern Europe than to make strong economic commitments in the area. Had it not been for

15. Stephen Woodlock, "Great Britain," in Reinhard Rode and Hanns-D. Jacobsen, eds., *Economic Warfare and Detente* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1985), p. 213.

16. Felix G. Rohatyn, "Who Pays for Eastern Europe?" *The Manchester Guardian Weekly* (September 3, 1989), p. 19. Similar views on aid to Eastern Europe are expressed in Judy Shelton, *The Coming Soviet Crash: Gorbachev's Desperate Pursuit of Credit in Western Financial Markets* (New York: Free Press, Macmillan, 1989), p. 145.

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American pressure to reach consensus at the Paris Summit, Thatcher was expected to oppose the Common Market's coordination of policy towards Eastern Europe.

Excluding the unknown variable of developments in Moscow, the chances of Poland, East Germany and Hungary joining the Common Market are good. In spite of strong tendencies towards protectionism and regionalism, West Europeans generally believe that active rather than reactive economic policy will lessen the destabilizing effect of systemic transitions in the area. Specifically, a United Europe may have a stake in seeing fewer East-West confrontations and less anti-Soviet feelings in the Eastern part of the continent.[17] Yet Western Europe may not reach such a level of political unity as to feel collectively responsible for the fate of Soviet leaders as Washington does today, or believe that they are competing with Moscow for Eastern Europe.

The initiative to bring East Europeans into the Common Market will most likely come from West Germany, not necessarily because it would encourage disengaging Poland and Hungary from the Soviet Union, but because it would be the most inconspicuous way to reunify. Until now, *Ostpolitik* represented the only real alternative to the Common Market's protectionism. Without a coordinated Common Market policy towards the East, Bonn will probably continue to play a key role in the region and provide the only option for Poles and Hungarians to end their isolation from Western Europe. The most likely impact of West German expansion in the East would be Bonn's rise to the level of a true regional power, even if formal reunification does not take place and East Germany retains a facade of political autonomy. However, leaving the economic initiative in the East to West Germany alone means acceptance by the Common Market of Moscow's bargaining game in which reunification is exchanged for multi-billion dollar loans, advanced technology, marginalization of the Atlantic Alliance and discarding hopes for Europe's political unification.

The Costs of the Bailout

Western European policy makers interested in helping Poland out of its economic morass today wonder about the costs and consequences of bailing out a bankrupt Soviet-type economy. A repetition of the 1970s situation, when massive lending to Poland postponed reforms,

17. Hans Peter-Schwartz, "Will Poland now be able to resume her membership in a 'United Europe'?" *Europa Archiv*, vol. 44, no. 11 (June 10, 1989).

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is unlikely. Short of injecting vast amounts of money (which State Department officials believe would eliminate the need for change) there are numerous "low-cost" ways of assisting Poland. Conditions attached to IMF/World Bank loans and bilateral assistance can assure the continuation of privatization and marketization of the Polish economy.[18]

For example, though it may sound paradoxical, the Polish debt issue is largely technical. Warsaw is the second largest debtor to the Paris Club governments (in contrast to its position among commercial bank creditors, where its debt is small relative to other countries). The significance of this difference is that, in the commercial sphere, where Poland is current on debt repayment, there is little incentive to risk innovative strategies for fear of setting precedents for larger commercial debtors. On the other hand, the Paris Club holds that government lending will carry fewer demands on Warsaw to impose austerity measures and marketize the economy than a loan provided through the IMF. However, the US (with 20% of the votes) has been blocking new IMF loans by supporting strict conditions.

Since Poland is not current in repayment of interest and principal on the government debt (Paris Club), the issue for the Administration is whether it should initiate a general deferment on current payments ($860 million) plus the remaining arrears of $3 billion already rescheduled. The Trzeciakowski plan (by the Government's chief economic adviser) seeks to create breathing space for the economy by limiting debt repayment to the fixed percentage of projected export earnings (e.g., 0-40%) and rescheduling the debt accordingly.

A long-term solution for the debt does not need any new appropriations but merely an executive decision by Bush to apply the debt reduction techniques outlined in the Brady Plan.[19] Another way of achieving debt reduction is through debt conversion, in which some of the existing debt is converted into a new asset. For example, the government might agree to convert some of the existing debt, which carries a floating

18. *Poland's Roundtable and U.S. Options* (Washington, DC: Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Congressional Research Service [June 1989]), p. 21.

19. Jeffrey Sachs, "Making the Brady Plan Work," *Foreign Affairs*, no. 3 (Summer 1989), p. 89. The debt reduction program could be multifaceted and use all the proposed methods: buybacks, conversion of debts into bonds with lower interest rates, and exchanging debt for equity. To finance the buybacks, Poland could use cash reserves obtained through debt rescheduling in the Paris Club (government debts) or money borrowed from the IMF or World Bank. Instead of continuously rescheduling the debts, Poland could repurchase its debts at a discounted price, for example, buy the debt for about 40 cents (the Trzeciakowski plan suggested 38 cents) on the dollar.

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market interest rate, into a new debt that carries a fixed below-market interest rate. As Sachs has suggested, this would be a more realistic alternative to the suspension of all Polish debt repayments.[20] Yet another reduction mechanism, as suggested by the Treasury, is a debt-equity swap. Poland can repurchase existing bank debt using local currency (actually such a solution has been proposed by West Germany) to either help solve environmental problems or develop any institution of mutual concern.

Clearly, the decision to reduce the Polish debt and release statutory loans from the IMF and the World Bank carry much lower direct costs to taxpayers than the administration claims. In fact, the American subscription to the IMF (planned to increase by $17 billion), unlike the contributions to other international bodies like the UN or the World Bank, is not a net budgetary outlay. Here the cash payment is immediately offset by enlarged domestic bank reserves held by the IMF.[21]

The fundamental question for the IMF today is whether the Solidarity government will be able to impose austerity measures necessary to introduce a market system. The IMF, World Bank and NSC have had a relatively easy job so far in finding arguments against stabilization loans to Poland. The Trzeciakowski Plan, calling for $10 billion ($2.7 billion from IMF, $3 billion from the World Bank and $4.3 billion of new bilateral credits) in total Western loans, did a considerable disservice to the perception of the new government in the West. The Plan, presented informally to the Paris Summit, was prepared by a group of Solidarity economists who were taken in by Sachs' optimism. Sachs, a former advisor to the Bolivian government, convinced them that Poland has a chance to obtain maximum country quotas from both organizations for three consecutive years. This "shopping list," frequently cited in the press, became Mazowiecki's inheritance by default and presented a dubious measure of financial prudence. By the end of September, however, Poland's new Finance Minister, Leszek Balcerowicz, presented to the IMF a detailed spending plan with the request for a $500 million stabilization loan.[22]

Another problem for the Mazowiecki government comes from the opposition-dominated Sejm. The newly elected deputies adopted a wage

20. Jeffrey Sachs, "By Helping Poland We Help Ourselves," *The New York Times* (September 11, 1989), p. 19.

21. *The New York Times*, "Rise in Money for the IMF is Predicted" (September 26, 1989), p. D8.

22. *The New York Times*, "International Aid Sought for Poland" (September 28, 1989), p. 1.

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indexation bill which ignored one of the fund's fundamental conditions for stopping wage inflation. Under the bill, 80% of Poland's expected almost 1000% inflation for 1989 could theoretically be compensated for by wage increases. Moreover, yielding to pressure from Solidarity's power base, the Senators passed a provision to keep all wage concessions granted prior to the bill's enactment. It was an invitation for hundreds of short strikes and economically suicidal wage hikes averaging 100 to 150% during the June-August interregnum. Finally, should the Paris Club continue delaying the debt rescheduling in 1990, the Finance Minister may be compelled to make the final tactical mistake: suspend the payment of the $860 million interest due for 1989.

The Mazowiecki government is clearly caught in a Catch-22 situation. Between legitimacy-seeking official trade unions (OPZZ) calling for new strikes, and the desperation of workers living under hyperinflation, meeting IMF conditions becomes a secondary priority. Without IMF loans, however, the Paris Club will not reschedule payments. Poland is a classic example of a "vicious circle of poverty." While the country's coal and food exporters are unable to raise hard currency beyond the debt service ($3.5 billion annually), almost nothing is left to buy Western technologies, without which no new export to the West is feasible. In short, if this government is to survive, Poland needs immediate food assistance, deferment of loan repayment and more money to buy technology. Only the first of these is likely to occur at this time.

Conclusions

The artificial equilibrium of the Cold War is over. The communist blanket, which for 45 years has been covering multiple national, political, religious and emotional aspirations of East Europeans, has been removed, and the relevence of European history is being rediscovered. It is obvious that Eastern Europe's drive to be absorbed by the West will have a profound impact on European economic integration, relations between the superpowers and the German reunification issue. The democratic domino effect in Eastern Europe has not only reset the margins of Soviet tolerance but has raised expectations about American and Western European political and economic involvement in the region.

When the Western cheering of the communist collapse in Eastern Europe is over, the world will have to face a new reality. Events in East Germany have clearly shown that Poland is becoming increasingly irrelevant. The bailout, if it is going to take place, will be carried out by the *de facto* reunified Germany within unified Europe. Moreover, neither

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the other EEC members nor the US will consider it a fundamental threat to European stability until German territorial claims against Poland emerge. Only then will the Solidarity government understand that their political existence does not depend on German economic recolonization of Poland but Moscow's guarantees of Poland's borders. The inability of the present Solidarity government to rally massive Western economic support has now been compounded by the reopening of East Germany, where most of the West German capital previously meant for Warsaw will soon nest. The failure of the Solidarity government which may ensue will not mean a return to *status quo ante* in Poland, but, at best, the demise of their illusions about a new Marshall Plan, IMF miracles and Germany's massive investments and neutrality.

Given the present state of affairs, there are three likely scenarios for the reassociation of Eastern Europe with the West.

1. *The German imperial model.* One possible course of events may be that West Germany will recolonize Central Europe by the sheer power of trade, technology, investments and technological dependence. The issue of German reunification or reannexation of Silesia or Pomerania will then become obsolete. Central European countries will play an auxiliary function to the German Empire by supplying low cost labor and resources in exchange for the goods they lack. An important part of this scenario may be the re-emergence of a special relation between Bonn and Moscow in which the acceptance of German unification by the latter will be exchanged for technology and capital provided to a shrunken and crumbling Russian Empire.

2. *The European model.* In this scenario, East Europeans will join the Common Market and seek to counter the German "*drang nach Osten*" by expanding their relations will all members of the Community. The French, who fear German domination in the EEC, may find Poles, Hungarians and Czechs potential allies in restoring European equilibrium after the admission of East Germany both to EEC and the motherland.

3. *The Austro-Hungarian model.* In this likely scenario, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland and Czechoslovakia may form a Central European Free Trade Association (CEFTA) and eventually develop a regional identity poised on developing a neutral zone in Central Europe — a new type of "*cordon sanitaire.*"

Short of excessive speculation on present European choices, East European future solutions will fall increasingly outside American and Soviet discretion. The end of the Cold War places Eastern Europe outside the superpower zero-sum game. Soviet military bases in the region will

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not be replaced by American ones. Communism will not be replaced by capitalism, nor will all East Europeans emigrate to the West. The countries of the region will, however, be absorbed into a global community with hybrid economic and political systems.[23] It is unrealistic to assume, however, that the dangers which the systemic transition entails will stop East Europeans from trying to restore sovereign statehood, even though the costs may be higher than expected.[24]

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23. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Failure: The Birth and Death of Communism in the Twentieth Century* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989), p. 273.

24. Some authors advise *status quo ante* solutions: "Eastern European reformers should consider whether establishing a radically renewed counterpart of the Common Market within the confines of the nearly defunct 'CMEA' is really such a futile idea, as almost everyone seems to assume at present. Similarly, dismantling the Warsaw Pact by various degrees of Finlandization 'may not be the soundest idea.' " Camiller wants the Left to "adopt" Eastern Europe: The "Western Left could grasp the opportunity for close collaboration with reform forces in the East to define a joint program for social and political advance. Europe might then become a genuinely united continent capable both of overcoming its own crises and of helping to reshape world economy and politics." Both Royen and Camiller are naive about the redeemable value and ideological viability of the post-Stalinist colonial system in Eastern Europe. If the Left can learn anything from the East European crises it is that traditional Marxism and command economies are taking their last breath. East Europeans are interested in capitalist Western Europe because they want to exchange an even distribution of poverty for an uneven distribution of wealth. See Christoph Royen, "Poland: 50 Years After," in *Studium Papers*, vol. 13, no. 3 (July 1989), p. 152; and Patrick Camiller, "Beyond 1992: The Left and Europe," *New Left Review* 175 (May/June, 1989), p. 14.

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*Problems of Conversion of Soviet Defense Industries**

Evgenii Kuznetsov and Felix Shirokov

The problem of conversion of science-intensive branches of industry in the USSR (those in which scientific research accounts for more than 5% of final production costs) has come about for at least two reasons. First of all, with the exception of tool-making, all such industries are currently part of the military-industrial complex. How can they be converted to civilian production? This problem is no less important than that of determining what kind of civilian production should replace military output. There will always be enterprises whose production concerns society's long-term interests (these include not only the military-industrial complex, but also, e.g., space exploration). Such enterprises usually provide no immediate return, but their technological sophistication helps spread new technical solutions throughout the economy. If there were effective means to transfer technology, the economic benefits of the Soviet space program could be significantly greater than they are, and there would be no need to reduce the space program. Secondly, all developed countries are entering a new economic era in which information is the main productive force. If the USSR does not develop information-processing capacities soon, it is likely to be left far behind modern civilization.

Here we will have to deal with the conversion of military production, since the enterprises with the technical means for information-processing are still part of the military-industrial complex. More importantly,

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information as a productive force requires the unimpeded exchange of research results between scientific institutions, corporations, and governments. Military production, presupposes secrecy, and hence restricts this free flow of information and technology. If such barriers are too great, the economy is doomed to stagnation. What type of interaction is possible between military and civilian production? How did Soviet modes of interaction in this area develop and how can they be transformed? The solution to these problems is essential to achieve conversion.

I

The interaction between military and civilian production in capitalist countries underwent a qualitative change with the curtailing of military spending after WWII. At that time, three different approaches were developed concerning the exchange of technological and R&D results between military and civilian enterprises. The first was developed in the US, where the Defense Department set the general direction of scientific-technological progress and supported a wide range of fundamental and applied research programs. What is crucial about it is its centralized nature and the method of funding. The fact that this function was and is performed by the military has significantly increased spending and limited the transfer of technology to civilian production. In Japan, for example, these functions were more efficiently fulfilled by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. At any rate, secrecy is required in the US only in select military R&D fields and is eventually lifted to allow commercial application. Moreover, every military program stipulates the possible civilian applications of technologies developed under its guidance.

Simultaneously, technology is readily exchanged between civilian and military enterprises. For instance, it was not the military which invented the microprocessor. Leading corporations in the US electronics industry have long been able to support practically all fundamental and applied research programs without having had to resort to Defense Department funding. Thus IBM's military contracts are less than 4% of its total production. In these circumstances, the Defense Department's technological policy had to evolve: the primary goal became to identify state-of-the-art civilian technologies and enlist them in military research. Despite generous military funding, however, these efforts have not always succeeded.

The second approach was developed in West European electronic industries in the 1950s and 1960s when defense research programs did

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not address fundamental problems but sought instead to imitate and improve US military R&D. Within such a context, no technological breakthrough could be achieved and, consequently, there was no technology transfer to civilian production. Furthermore, defense-related enterprises were protected from competition by government contracts, while civilian science-intensive industries, lacking a technological policy, were compelled to imitate and market US advances.

Because of the unchallenged priority of military science-intensive enterprises, conservatism and lack of competition left Western Europe unprepared for the mid-1970s "microchip revolution." Thus, despite subsequent large-scale, inter-European programs such as "Alvy," ESPRIT, and "Eureka," today Western Europe still lags behind the US and Japan in science-intensive production. In any case, in developed capitalist countries civilian science-intensive production takes place in a diversified and technologically sophisticated marketplace of parts and raw materials, independent of military contracts.

In the Soviet Union the situation is altogether different. The exchange of technology between civilian science-intensive branches of the economy and defense enterprises takes place in two ways. First, civilian consumers receive low-grade, outdated products — either raw materials or equipment — that for some reason are unacceptable to the military. Second, military enterprises readily appropriate civilian R&D without compensation. The result is "waste-free production": military contractors expropriate the best products and leave the rest to civilian science-intensive enterprises (data-processing, industrial electronics, etc.). Since there is practically no possibility of importing what they need, these low-quality products are the only source of parts for civilian industries. Finally, flawed products which cannot satisfy even second-priority industrial enterprises are relegated to the consumer electronics industry and other civilian science-intensive sectors. This explains the disproportionately high costs of assembly, adjustment and repairs in the civilian electronics industry. Consequently, there simply is no independent civilian microelectronics industry that could benefit from a transfer of state-of-the-art technology from the military sector. These technologies are developed in universities and research institutes, and the results often have military applications. But civilian science and, to a lesser extent, civilian tool-making are in such a backward state that someone seeking to develop some ideas is practically compelled to turn to the military-industrial complex for funding. There is no alternative, since venture capital is unavailable in the USSR and civilian ministries are universally underfunded.

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Technological interaction between the military and civilian sectors of science-intensive industries in the USSR takes place through what is called "waste-free production" and "research-for-hire." The aim of conversion is to radically change all this.

II

Who is in favor of conversion and who is likely to oppose it? The Soviet military-industrial complex has long-range economic interests which can hinder conversion. The priority granted to defense-related enterprises guarantees their stability, but it also creates a monopoly. All monopolies seek to insure the necessary conditions for future growth. Ostensibly, this should be controlled by administrative monitoring of defense-related expenditures, and by natural limits on the acquisition of new technologies from civilian industries and the world market. Since this does not happen in the Soviet administrative system, the military-industrial complex has simply grown unimpeded. Another factor contributing to the unchecked growth of the military-industrial complex is related to the USSR's particular role in international technological exchanges.

Any technologically backward country begins by borrowing foreign technology. This was Japan's industrial strategy in the 1950-60s. The Soviet Union was denied access to some new technologies because of potential military applications. But even when foreign technology could be purchased, chronic shortages of hard currency lead to "borrowing" rather than buying it. This is why copying technological prototypes, products and circuits developed in capitalist countries became standard Soviet practice. The main function of many scientific institutes became simply "adapting" these purloined science-intensive products. This strategy remained in force until the mid-1950s. Later, the emphasis shifted to manufacturing technologies for advanced products. The unsanctioned appropriation of these technologies, however, proved difficult and eventually impossible. Thus the USSR became increasingly compelled to purchase foreign technology and know-how.

After the mid-1950s, the interaction between the Soviet Union and developed capitalist countries can be divided into four periods. The first lasted until the early 1960s. In those years, computational and communication machines, computer and communication technologies did not play a dominant military role. For this reason, Soviet scientists had access to the latest foreign advances, and could not only acquire technological prototypes but also exchange scientific ideas with their

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foreign counterparts. Soviet computer designers could visit leading foreign companies. The computer architecture of the ATLAS machine at Manchester University was used to design the Soviet BESM-6 computer. Implementation of advanced foreign ideas (as opposed to solutions) led to the success of the BESM-6 project and gave rise to the myth of the originality of Soviet computers.

After the mid-1960s, the arms race became the technology race. Electronics became strategically important in the development of weapons systems. At that point, the Soviet Union faced two alternatives: the American strategy of technological exchange between military and civilian enterprises; and the West European strategy based on technological imitation. Instead of choosing one of the two, a contradictory third alternative was chosen. Military enterprises, especially those dealing with strategically important technologies, were encouraged to seek domestic technological solutions, while general-purpose equipment was copied from Western prototypes. Because of limited resources, military enterprises ended up monopolizing scientific research. The Technical Sciences Department of the Academy of Sciences was broken up and its institutes transferred to industrial ministries. This intensified the isolation of the military sector. Its inadequate contribution to the civilian sector, which had been developing since the late 1950s, led to "waste-free production." The end result was the high quality of space and military science-intensive products, and the increasing shoddiness of consumer goods.

The use of foreign technical experience was justifiable, but it was also necessary to improve borrowed technologies through domestic research and, most importantly, to enter the world market with new high-tech products. Had this happened, Soviet scientific and technical interaction with capitalist countries would have evolved accordingly. Since it did not, military industries soon ran into problems because of the low quality of civilian high-tech products.

The sharp rise in world prices of oil after 1973 led to a growing interest in energy-saving technologies and a dramatic expansion of commercial science-intensive industries in this field. This resulted in a rationalization of the interaction between military and civilian technologies: throughout the capitalist world, defense-related enterprises operate in a highly developed marketplace of science-intensive products, which prevents monopolies and avoids stagnation. The Soviet economy, on the other hand, continued to focus on large-scale industrial works while a demand for civilian electronics never materialized.

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Whatever was available was appropriated by military industries. This ishow "waste-free production" came into being. In subsequent years, this type of production increased, with spurious economic indicators like the total output volume showing a steady increase, thus satisfying both the electronics ministries and central planning requirements.

Total secrecy became state policy in the overwhelming majority of enterprises engaged in science-intensive production. Not only did the transfer of technology to the civilian sector become impossible, but the borrowing of innovations by the defense sector became problematic. Ideas would be developed into a working prototype and then disappear in the bureaucratic maze of the military-industrial complex.

The Soviet intervention in Afghanistan at the end of 1979 resulted in an embargo and a sharp decline in the West's high-tech trade with the USSR. Many foreign companies recalled their representatives in Moscow, while others reduced personnel and operations. The strictness of restrictions on exports to the USSR varies with the type of goods and technologies. These exports fall roughly into two groups: equipment and technologies whose export is absolutely banned, and products whose export is allowed but considered undesirable. Breaking the former ban can result in heavy sanctions, up to and including imprisonment and the exclusion of the guilty exporter from the US marketplace. As for products considered "exportable," they can be delivered to the USSR provided the proper license is obtained. The granting of such licenses depends on who is the final recipient and what is the declared use of the product.

Roundabout ways of obtaining restricted technologies can always be found. However, in these cases cost increases considerably, since foreign suppliers seek compensation for their risks. In addition to the sought-after technologies, the USSR is often compelled to purchase less attractive goods that the supplier wants to unload.

Civilian science-intensive enterprises find themselves in a double bind. They cannot purchase the necessary high-tech supplies on the world market. At the same time, the internal high-tech market is dominated by the military. The foreign marketplace thus becomes a "seller's market," where the supplier dictates both prices and terms of delivery. From an economic viewpoint, the major long-range goal of conversion consists of remedying this stifling situation, which leads to the stagnation of civilian science-intensive production and subsequently all production.

In order to do so, several monopolies must be abolished. The monopoly in most urgent need to be abolished is that of central planning, which gauges economic development solely by means of formal indicators such

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as total output volume. Since changing the mode of interaction between civilian and military enterprises will lead to the disappearance of low-grade science-intensive products and a temporary slowing of high-tech output, the central planning bureaucracy is bound to oppose any change. The second monopoly that must be eliminated is the ministerial apparatus regulating "high tech" production through its research institutes and international trade organizations. The latter are interested in the perpetuation of the embargo because it protects Soviet products from foreign high-tech competition.

The high-tech embargo helps particularly the Soviet international trade organization's staff, since it renders their activities practically uncontrollable. Purchase of sophisticated equipment involves lengthy negotiations, in the course of which the originally quoted price is usually bargained down. The art of commerce consists precisely in this bargaining down of the quoted price without diminishing the quality of the purchased goods. Ordinarily, this task is very difficult, since the reference market prices are readily available in specialized catalogs. The purchase of goods falling within the group spelled out by the embargo is a different matter altogether. Here the original price can be set artificially high and then lowered to some predetermined level which depends, among other things, on the bribe offered by the seller to the buyer. Consequently, the inevitable paring of the banned-products list that will result from the rationalization of interactions between Soviet military and civilian enterprises will result in financial hardship for those who now benefit from the present system.

Defense enterprises have achieved a number of unquestionable successes, but this is no argument against fundamental transformation of existing technological exchange mechanisms. First of all, Soviet ministries manage "Potemkin village" programs (regardless of cost). Thus Soviet military programs are not only outrageously expensive, but sometimes downright laughable — e.g., newspapers recently reported plans for the construction of a super-secret engine which could break the speed of light. Secondly, all scientific breakthroughs are achieved in spite of, rather than because of, existing monopoly structures in Soviet microelectronics and other high-tech areas. The abolition of "waste-free production," the redeployment of hard-currency expenditures to support civilian production, and the elimination of monopolies in high-tech sectors are the three main avenues to an effective conversion.

The redeployment of hard-currency expenditures is likely to increase in the near future. Hard currency must be expended both on

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manufacturing lines for a new consumer electronics, such as VCRs, and on the modernization of light industries dealing with, e.g., foodstuffs. The bankrolling of this conversion has to be done by turning to the world market. Military enterprises must be converted to produce civilian goods for such a market. In the course of conversion, it may be expedient to enter into joint ventures with capitalist companies. Various corporations in the US, Western Europe, and South Korea may be interested. The USSR's intellectual potential should allow, in the near future if not immediately, the manufacture of technological products based on original ideas such as neural network machines and software, or parallel data processing architectures. The "latecomer's advantage" — the absence of inertia favoring established technologies — can enhance the market potential of these technologies.

The demonopolization of science-intensive industries depends also on changes in control over international technological exchange. American studies have shown that rigid export controls in this area are ineffective. It turns out that the effectiveness of technology transfer is largely determined by the capacity of the receiving country to reproduce high-tech equipment in indigenous industries, which in turn is a function of the economy's general technological level. US export controls vary greatly according to the type of technology transfer and the terms of cooperation. What is crucial is that export controls and related procedures of maintaining technological secrets are subsumed by the more general goals of establishing effective technological transfer (from research to production, from the military to the civilian economies, and between different branches of the economy) among US and foreign companies. The opposite is the case in the USSR. Secrecy is an economic concept. It is a barrier to technological exchange. Consequently, in order to bring about economic conversion, it is necessary to re-think secrecy.

III

Today the main difficulty hindering conversion is that many apparently obvious decisions to redeploy production (the manufacture of heavy tractors instead of tanks, for example) are economically counterproductive. Although military enterprises could be easily retooled to produce traditional technologies, the Soviet economy is already saturated with such goods. What can be done? Conceivably, excess technological products such as heavy construction machinery and traditional agricultural equipment could be exported. For example, the production of tractors could be redirected towards exports almost as soon

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as new technological exchange arrangements are established. But the problem of general conversion can only be solved in the context of the total reconstruction of the economy. By no means should conversion be limited to changes in the military-industrial complex, such as retooling some military enterprises for civilian production. Defense-related needs have already deformed the economy enough.

If military production is reduced, it affects a long chain of subsidiary enterprises: from suppliers of raw materials to subsidiary equipment manufacturers. Consequently, conversion implies the redeployment of the ubiquitous linked chains of enterprises devoted to military production, rather than the retooling of individual units. The entire economic framework needs restructuring.

Part of the technological equipment required for retooling military enterprises can only be manufactured by the civilian machine-building industry, whose capacity is already strained. Thus highly-trained personnel in military industries will have to work temporarily in the mundane production required to refit existing equipment, e.g., the manufacture of baby carriages instead of rockets.

Conversion should take place in two stages. The first stage consists in the elimination of the sharp dividing line between military and civilian production. Here the main problem is to maintain production (and hence jobs) on the manufacturing lines of existing military enterprises. The economic return from this first stage will be small owing to the extremely restricted range of conversion alternatives. Significant progress can be expected only in the second stage, when technological exchange between military and civilian production begins to take place, "waste-free production" disappears, and civilian production increases, spurred by targeted investments. The first, transitional, stage involves the conversion of military production using only the resources of the military-industrial complex; the second stage involves the conversion of the entire economy on the basis of Soviet industrial capacity and the world market.

The conversion process cannot escape the fundamental opposition between society's long and short-term interests. To some extent, the goals and problems of these two stages are contradictory. The oft-cited figures on the increasing share of civilian products in the total production output are only short-term conversion indicators. In the long run, conversion must be a major force in the reconstruction of the Soviet economy.

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Notes and Commentary:

Reply to Guy Oakes

Luciano Pellicani

Oakes' criticism of my "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism" is both surprising and predictable.[1] "Surprising," because Oakes still has no doubts concerning the validity of Weber's thesis. "Predictable," because Weberians have always followed Oakes' approach in responding to criticism. First used by Ernst Troeltsch against Felix Rachfahl, and by Talcott Parsons and Julien Freund against H. M. Robertson and Herbert Luthy, it consists in claiming that critics have failed to grasp the real meaning of the thesis — either because of ignorance of some of Weber's work, or because of lack of familiarity with his methodology. Oakes claims that I did not take into account Weber's essay on the American Protestant sects, written after his visit to the US and his response to Fischer and Rachfahl. He fails to indicate, however, how these works modify Weber's account.[2]

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1. "Farewell to *The Protestant Ethic*?" in *Telos* 78 Winter (1988-89), pp. 81-94. My original essay appeared in *Telos* 75 (Summer 1988), pp. 57-85.

2. In his work on the American Protestant sects, Weber reiterated his basic thesis: Puritanism paved the way for "the modern bourgeois capitalist *ethos*. Only the methodical way of life of the ascetic sects could legitimate and put a halo around the economic 'individualist' impulses of the modern capitalist *ethos*." See "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated, edited and with an introduction by H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 322. But in terms of the historical role of Puritanism during the first phase of Northern American colonization, there were efforts to organize the colonies on strictly collectivist bases. See Stanley Diamond, "Values as Obstacles to Economic Growth: the American Colonies" in *The Journal of Economic History* (December 1967). In other words, Puritanism was an obstacle to capitalist development in the Anglo-American colonies. If this development did take place, it was due to their particular political autonomy, which was very similar to that of medieval communes. The fate of Spanish-American colonies was different because they were imprisoned in the "iron cage" of a centralizing state, which methodically stifled private enterprise with its bureaucracy; without private enterprise there can be no capitalism. (See Salvador de Madariaga, *Ascesa Dell'Impero Ispano-Americano* (Varese: Dall'Oglio, 1965). Weber's responses to his critics, while indispensable for a reconstruction of the debate, contain nothing new.

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Oakes also accuses me of mistaking the modern spirit of capitalism for something completely different. Godric Finchale, he claims, was simply a commercial adventurer lacking the specific ethic of the modern middle class: "sobriety and diligence in commercial affairs; a dedication to the business enterprise rather than to the personal wealth of the businessman; the minimization of risk through careful analysis and calculation; and the ethic of stewardship that requires an unconditional obligation to conduct business as a high moral calling and ethic that provided the entrepreneur with what Weber characterized as pharisaically good conscience in the making of money."[3] But even if this description of the capitalist, middle-class ethic is accepted, Oakes' conclusions do not follow. While Godric represents a fairly crude and primitive embodiment of the businessman as a sociological type — after all, he only lived during the formative stage of capitalism and its spirit — all the intellectual and moral qualities listed by Oakes can be readily found in Marco Datini's Francesco. The huge Datini archive contains thousands of documents (personal and business letters, business documents) which make it crystal clear that he was quite the opposite of an adventurer. A tireless worker, who was orderly, methodical and prudent in calculating risks, Datini scrupulously followed a moral code, and had an almost religious dedication to business. Thus he took pride in the fact that he never traded slaves or made illegal profits.) Datini has been described by Sapori — whose work Oakes choses to ignore — as the prototype of the modern businessman.[4] Sapori is not alone. No medievalist would deny today that an authentic capitalist spirit developed among the middle classes in the Low Middle Ages.[5]

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3. Guy Oakes, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

4. Armando Sapori, "Economica e Morale alla Fine del Trecento: Francesco di Marco Datini e ser Lapo Mazzei," in *Studi di Storia Economica* (Florence: Sansoni, 1982), pp. 155-79. See also Iris Origo, *Il Mercante di Prato* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1988). Most of all, however, Federigo Mellis has convincingly documented that the spirit of modern capitalism did not have to wait for the Reformation to come into being in his *Aspetti della Vita Economica Medievale* (Florence: Olschki, 1962).

5. Alexander Gerschenkron writes: "Misconceiving an hypothesis made by Weber as a joke, many today are led to attribute to Protestantism the cause of a new attitude towards labor and the subsequent birth of capitalism. Unfortunately this is an historical distortion, and it contrasts markedly with the chronology of European social history. In fact, the new attitude towards labor, the products of labor and the consumers of such products was born within the institutional framework of medieval cities, many centuries earlier than Protestantism. Like liberty, industriousness and parsimony were produced by the cities' air." See his *La continuità storica* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), pp. 256-57. A typical example of this is in Robert K. Merton's *The Sociology of Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973). Accordingly, Calvinism stimulated scientific development. But Merton himself acknowledges that science developed in Geneva only in the 17th century, i.e., after Calvinist control lessened. Furthermore, the fathers of modern physics — Copernicus and Galileo — were both Catholics. Finally, the extraordinary scientific creativity of 17th century Holland owed less than nothing to Calvinism. It was the result of a real "market of religions and ideas," which flourished only because the doctrine prescribed by Dordrecht failed to become state orthodoxy. See Johan Huizinga, *Dutch Civilization in the 17th Century and Other Essays* (London: Collins, 1968), trans. by Arnold J. Pomerans.

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In order to claim that there was no capitalist spirit (in Weber's own sense) in Europe before the Reformation, one has to ignore all the literature documenting the opposite, such as Oscar Nuccio's massive work on Italian capitalism in the Low Middle Ages.[6] The latter is essentially a synthesis of conclusions reached earlier by other medievalists,[7] which were the basis of my own reconstruction of the genesis of capitalism and its spirit.[8]

Oakes argues further that only the Protestant ethic has successfully institutionalized a system of psychological sanctions and moral incentives, thanks to which the entrepreneurial profession has been fully legitimated. But the theory of the morally worthy character of the merchant profession was already formulated in medieval literature, along with the view that God approves and encourages the devotion of one's life to the methodical accumulation of wealth. In his *Liber consolationis* (1246), Albertano da Brescia advocates the making of honest profit. Nuccio compares the mendicant friars' "pedagogy of fear" with his "pedagogy of profit," where he tells his listeners that "to acquire wealth . . . will not be offending God in any way."[9]

An even stronger legitimation of the profit-making spirit can be found in Giovanni di Pagolo Morelli (1371-1444). In his *Ricordi* he introduces "fortunate trade as a service to God."[10] This notion had been deeply rooted in the merchants' consciousness for some time. As of the 13th century, there was a specific entry for the "accounts of God, the Lord." This referred to "monies that merchants donated to the poor and to charitable institutions to make sure that their own souls would not meet with unpleasant surprises in the next world. The Creator was treated like a business partner and the share he was entitled to depended on the profit made by the company. Thus it was in God's direct interest to give entrepreneurs the highest return! This was an extremely rational way of inducing the Creator to listen to the prayers of merchants and bankers. The piety of merchants was imbued with the commercial spirit just as their pursuit of worldy goods was seen by them as a divine affair. Not only was the honorable conduct of commercial affairs not a hindrance to salvation, but actually furthered it. In any case, this is the conviction of the author of an inscription on a building constructed in the 15th century by the Valencia trading company: the merchant who does not sin in language, who keeps promises made to his fellowmen, and who does not lend money at usurious rates 'will enrich' and will

6. Oscar Nuccio, *Il Pensiero Economico Italiano. L'Etica Laica e la Formazione dello Spirito Economico* (Cagliari: Gallizzi, 1984).

7. Thus Jean Meyer has written that "no one dares deny any longer that our Western capitalism was born in Catholic urban Italy at the end of the Middle Ages." See his *Les Capitalismes* (Paris: PUF, 1977), p. 27.

8. Luciano Pellicani, *Saggio sulla Genesi del Capitalismo. Alle Origini della Modernità* (Milan: SugarCo, 1988).

9. Oscar Nuccio, "Mutazione Umanistica dell' Avaritia da Vizio Telogico a Virtù Civile," in *Rivista di Politica Economica*, no. VI (1987), p. 37.

10. Aron J. Gurevic, "Il Mercante," in Jacques Le Goff, ed., *L'Uomo Medievale* (Bari: Laterza, 1987), p. 303.

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be worthy of eternal life. On the seals of English merchants, we read mottoes such as 'The Lord's right hand has raised me.' They similarly refer to the estate 'granted them by God' in their wills."[11]

This is not just a question of self-legitimation. Before the commercial revolution, the Church's highest authorities found themselves forced to soften the anti-commercial slant of the Christian ethic. In 1197, in canonizing Omobono, a merchant from Cremona, Innocent III was "sanctifying the profession."[12] The same applies to Jacopo da Varazze, the bishop of Genoa, and Federigo Visconti, the bishop of Pisa, when they compared "the merchant to Christ himself."[13]

It follows that Italian Renaissance humanists should have apologized for profit and praised a middle class life spent not in idleness but in methodical professional labor. Thus Poggio Bracciolini claimed that "this is the aim of whatever we deal with, operate or do: to gain the maximum advantage." He even formulated a theorem anticipating Mandeville: "Monies are necessary and act as the muscles that support the State of which, when there are many misers, they are to be considered the basis and the foundation."[14]

Middle-class businessmen did not need to wait for the Protestant ethic to legitimate their individualist economic impulses.[15] Centuries before the reformed preachers came on the scene, they had seen to it that the Christian ethic was remolded to suit the specific interests of their class. The Church, in great need of money, had opportunistically made a distinction between large and small markets, applying its anathemas only to the latter. Thus, as of the 14th century, the great Italian bankers "were not labelled as usurers and lived as honored citizens, occupying for the most part positions of authority . . . and priding themselves in being the Pope's bankers."[16]

Oakes could argue here that what is still lacking is the figure of the inner-worldly ascetic who, moved by the psychological necessity of proving to himself — as well as to God and others — that he belonged to the chosen family, is transformed into an accumulator of capital. But what is the evidence for Weber's interpretation? Oakes merely repeats what Weber himself wrote on the subject, without providing any new concrete facts. Historians have *in fact* shown that "Protestantism had little to do with the development of capitalism"[17] and

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11. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
12. Robert Fossier, *L'Infanzia dell'Europa* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1987), p. 662.
13. Gurevic, "Il Mercante," *op. cit.*, p. 295.
14. Nuccio, "Mutazione Umanistica" *op. cit.*, pp. 51, 57.
15. Gregorio Dati went so far as to claim that "a Florentine who is not a merchant, who has not travelled throughout the world, seeing different countries and people, and then returned to Florence to enjoy a certain wealth, is a man who will not enjoy any respect." Quoted in Christopher Hibbert, *Ascesa e Caduta di Casa Medici* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988), p. 14.
16. Raymond de Roover, *Il Banco Medici dalle Origini al Declino* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1988), p. 18.
17. Carl J. Hamilton, "American Treasure and the Rise of Capitalism" in *Economica* (November 1929), p. 342.

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relegated Weber's thesis to the "cemetery of falsified hypotheses." What is not clear is why Oakes thinks there has been a misunderstanding.

Oakes claims that the Renaissance knew only the figure of the "economic superman." On this point too, the conclusions reached by contemporary historiography are diametrically the opposite. Raymond de Roover, to cite just one of the many scholars who have dissected the structure and culture of merchant capitalism, has explicitly emphasized that his study of the Medici bank in the 15th century "disproves Max Weber's theory, according to which the capitalist spirit is a product of the Calvinist Reformation."[18] One need only read Leon Battista Alberti's *I Libri della Famiglia* to realize that a century prior to the Reformation the middle class *Weltanschauung* had already been broadly outlined: prudence, honesty, methodical labor and the rational use of money and time. To escape from "sleep and sloth, always doing something": these are the qualities tirelessly advocated by Alberti, who was reiterating ideas which had been circulating freely in the middle classes of Italian cities for generations.[19] They are not about economic supermen. As Romero, among others, has shown, these ideas constitute the starting point of the modern middle class mentality, wholly dominated by *ratio*, by the ideal of the *homo faber* and by utility.[20]

It is useless here to repeat what Weber said to Sombart, i.e., that Alberti's ideas had no influence on businessmen's behavior and the spirit with which they built their economic empires, which preceded and influenced the *literati*.[21] The specific culture of modern capitalism — based on the spirit of acquisition, rationalization, the world ethic, and a utilitarian vision of life — was not generated by any given preacher or scholar. Quite the opposite: this culture required no progenitor external to the economic sphere to come into being and grow. It was generated spontaneously, and fought against the fierce opposition of all the Christian churches — above all the Calvinist church — which Weber thinks supposedly "favors the breeding and exaltation of the professionalism needed by capitalism and bureaucracy."[22]

Weber himself explicitly acknowledged that "the Italians . . . developed

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18. de Roover, *Il Banco dei Medici*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

19. Leon Battista Alberti, *I Libri della Famiglia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1980), p. 214.

20. José Luis Romero, *Estudio de la Mentalidad Burguesa* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1987).

21. Yves Renourd, *Gli Uomini di Affari Italiani del Medioevo* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1973), p. 350. Alberto Tenenti has written that "the anthropomorphic or semimagic conception was replaced by an increasingly rational mentality, in part because of the diffusion of a general merchant perspective." See his "Il Mercante e il Banchiere," in Eugenio Garin, ed., *L'Uomo del Rinascimento* (Bari: Laterza, 1988), p. 234. Early Italian capitalism, which created "the essentials of the current commercial and financial techniques," had reached such a level that in the 14th century the Bardi and the Peruzzi could afford to finance European royalty with astronomical amounts of money.

22. Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), vol. 2, p. 1200.

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modern capitalist economic organization."[23] But if such is the case, how could such a "modern capitalistic economic organization" have existed for centuries without its own specific spirit? Certainly the "capitalistic form" and the "capitalistic spirit" do not always coincide. Nonetheless, Weber states that the two "generally stand in some sort of adequate relationship to each other, but not in one of necessary interdependence."[24] Thus, even on the basis of what Weber himself wrote, often ambiguous and contradictory, it is impossible to support his conclusions.

Yet another fact should finish off Weber's thesis once and for all: that, by and large, the Reformation was strongly anti-capitalist. Oakes implies that I used Luther's and Calvin's fierce anti-mammonism as proof of the falsity of the Weber hypothesis.[25] Admittedly, in *The Protestant Ethic* Weber sees no elective affinities between the spirit of capitalism and Lutheran theology[26] and takes great care to distinguish between Calvin's and the Neocalvinists' theology.[27] But this is not enough. How can Weber claim that Baxter anticipates the famous Smithian apology on the capitalistic division of labor, when Baxter's concept of society is organicist and simply follows Thomas Aquinas?[28] How is it possible to insinuate, as Weber does, that Methodism was a step towards the "total rationalization of life" — Oakes' words — when John Wesley's method consisted of activating

23. Max Weber, "Parliament and Government in a Reconstructed Germany," Appendix to Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. 2, *op. cit.* p. 1400.

24. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, translated by Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 64.

25. Oakes finds it "incomprehensible" that I praise Gianfranco Poggi's *Capitalism and the Capitalistic Spirit* (London: Macmillan, 1983). My appreciation refers to the accuracy of Poggi's reconstruction of Weber's thesis and not to the thesis' validity.

26. Weber should have come to the same conclusion with reference to Calvin's theology since, in the latter, the concept of calling is based on a static, and therefore far from modern, understanding of the division of labor.

27. In one of his polemical responses to critics, Weber wrote: "It should be remembered that 'Reformed' is not simply equatable with 'Calvinist,' and that 'Calvinism' (as I have repeatedly stressed, in no sense identical with the genuine doctrine of Calvin) first evidenced itself in *full-blown* form in its development to ascetic Protestantism." See Max Weber "Kritische Bemerkungen zu den vorstehenden 'Kritische Beiträgen'," in Weber, *Die protestantische Ethik II: Kritiken und Antikritiken* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1987), p. 30.

28. Jeannette Tawney is very clear on this: "Except for the interpretation of usury which they borrowed from Calvin, Ames and Baxter reproduced essentially Aquinas' doctrines. . . . That economic transactions are to be judged by a rule of right derived ultimately from religion, and that the exposition of the moral standards by which they are to be tried is as much the function of the Church as is teaching with regard to any other aspect of human conduct — these conceptions had been the foundation on which not only mediaeval schoolmen, but every section of the Reformers had based their teaching. Their virtual disappearance from religious philosphy of the 18th century had effects which were little less than revolutionary. It was to make possible the treatment of questions of economic morality and social policy in a spirit which, while it had conspicuous virtues of its own, owed little directly to any influence springing from Christian thought." *Introduction to Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory* (London: Bell and Sons, 1925), p. XVI.

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the irrational element in the faithful and driving them to hysteria?[29] Lastly, how can Weber write that "the Puritan outlook . . . under all circumstances . . . favored the development of a rational bourgeois economic life," that it "stood at the cradle of the modern economic man,"[30] and that "capitalist profit is one of the most important criteria for establishing that God's blessing rests on the enterprise,"[31] when people like Ames, Bunyan, Baxter and Wesley spent their whole lives warning their "flock" not to give in to the spirit of money-making? Oakes systematically avoids posing quesions of this kind in order to save an extravagant theory according to which the anticapitalistic preaching of the Puritan theologians generated or, in any event, stimulated the legitimation of middle-class professional labor.

Undoubtedly Weber is right when he polemizes against those who identify the spirit of modern capitalism with *auri sacra fames*. But this in no way contributes to an understanding of how Puritanism could have fostered, albeit indirectly, the "calling for capitalistic gain." Weber says explicitly that "worldly Protestant asceticism . . . had the psychological effect of freeing the acquisition of goods from the inhibitions of traditionalitic ethics. It broke the chains of the impulse of acquisition in that it not only legalized it, but . . . looked upon it as directly willed by God."[32] But it was precisely gain that was considered to be the greatest danger for the salvation of the soul by all the Puritan preachers. (The sole exceptions were Somaise and Steele, whose ideas had only a minor impact and were energetically refuted by their fellow preachers.) They issued fierce and tireless condemnations of the professional practice of trading in money, a lubricant of the capitalistic machinery that would have been completely lacking had the Calvinists been successful in imposing their theological prohibitions. Their success in Scotland and Geneva blocked the economic development of both countries for the whole 17th century.[33] But they were not successful in

29. Weber emphasizes that Calvinism made a step forward in the process of removing magic from the world. This is questionable, since the Calvinist universe was populated, even more than the Catholic one, by magical powers. In the iron century, the highly Calvinist Scotland had the absolute record of cases against sorcery — 4000 victims against the 200 of Counter-Reformation Spain! See Garcia Carcel, "La Stregoneria in Europe," in Nicola Tranfaglia and Massimo Firpo, ed., *La storia*, vol. IV, (Turin: UTET, 1986), p. 455. In England in the first half of the 17th century, while the Stuarts did not believe in witchcraft and practically eliminated persecutions against those accused of possessing magical and perverse powers, "the Calvinists, the Presbyterians and the Puritans considered witches as the best servants of the Devil." Jean Palou, *La sorcellerie* (Paris: PUF, 1985), p. 83.

30. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

31. Weber, *Economy and Society*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 1200.

32. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.

33. According to Oakes, the Scottish case is not enough to falsify Weber's thesis. The fact is, however, that not a single case confirms this thesis: the Calvinist sects opposed capitalist gain always and in every case; and they did so in accordance with their ethical-religious principles.

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imposing their inner-worldly asceticism, pervaded by a horror for Mammon, in Holland, France, England and the Anglo-American colonies. These countries managed to head the "capitalistic convoy," precisely because they had escaped from the hold of Calvinist bibliocracy.

Oakes answers that Weber was perfectly aware of this, and that his thesis should be interpreted as a "paradox of consequences." This may have heuristic value, but it cannot be invoked to abolish *everything* that contradicts Weber's thesis; that would simply remove the argument from the "court of falsification."[34] In *The Protestant Ethic* Weber did expressly state that the consequences of the neo-Calvinist ethic were the opposite of those originally intended. But he also formulates exactly opposite arguments. He says very clearly that this ethic raised capitalistic profit to a sign of divine election. For anyone with any knowledge of Puritan literature, this is obviously a figment of Weber's imagination. For Oakes, this means nothing. It is as if the Weber thesis were a sort of unfalsifiable metaphysical dogma.

In Oakes' reply one would have expected to find reference to at least one page by *any* Calvinist preacher indicating the possibility of acquiring *certitudo salutis* with economic success and an analysis of the Protestant preachers' public indicating that they were businessmen or individuals transformed into "ascetic accumulators of capital." Like other defenders of Weber's thesis, Oakes assumes what needs to be demonstrated, i.e., that the type of personality forged by the Calvinist *ethos* was a "necessary condition for the development of the spirit of capitalism." This is difficult to demonstrate, since everything known about the international Calvinist movement shows that, while it it had an effect on popular culture, it had little influence on economic elites. It is easy to understand why: their obsessive condemnations of usury, gain and the spirit of profit would not have drawn middle class businessmen to Knox or Baxter.[35]

The role of the Puritan movement in 17th century English society was exactly

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34. The fact that Weber's entire account is based on extremely scant empirical foundations should be food for thought: a few miserable quotes plucked from a huge number of works meant to show that Puritan preachers condemned taking pleasure in possessions but not in the acquisition of goods. This is inadequate. At any rate, Baxter is the only Puritan Weber allows to speak for himself. All others — Ames, Bunyan, Wesley, *et al.* appear in *The Protestant Ethic* almost as speechless dummies. Even granting that Weber understands the maxims in the *Christian Directory*, one is still left with a disconcerting conclusion — that the spirit of capitalism came onto the scene following the preachings of a theologian whose influence, even in England, was not particularly great.

35. Perez Zagorin, *Rebels and Rulers* (Cambride, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 146-62. Zagorin has documented how the cadres of the international Calvinist movement came from the nobility and the intelligensia, while the base was mostly made up of artisans and workers. There were some businessmen, but not to the extent of giving a capitalist-middle class character to a movement whose basic inspiration was collectivist. Although in the second half of the 17th century the middle class element increased, this seems to have occurred because the rigid community discipline and anti-capitalist spirit, typical of Calvinism, had waned.

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the opposite of the one Weber attributed to it. The Puritans did not contribute to the middle classes' increased self-awareness, and certainly did not legitimate their "individualistic motives of rational legal acquisition."[36] Puritan preachers were tireless in criticizing the privileges of the merchant oligarchy, and in demanding that professional usurers be "thrust out of the society of men."[37] As Walzer has convincingly shown, their ideal was to found a "Christian Sparta,"[38] austere and disciplined, in which all were brothers in the Real Faith, and trade and usury were banned — an ideal which "had little to contribute to the development of liberalism or capitalism."[39] This ideal was so radically antithetical to liberal capitalism that many scholars — Gramsci, Tawney, Voegelin, Walzer, Zagorin — have compared the Calvinist bibliocracy to the Jacobins' or the Bolsheviks' ideological dictatorship.

Weber completely misinterpreted the Westminister Confession when he claimed it contained the secret of the "qualitative formation" and "quantitative expansion" of the spirit of modern capitalism. Luthy was closer to the mark when he called it "an instrument of terror created at the peak of the Puritan Revolution."[40] Its merciless doctrine of predestination was taken directly from the Dordrecht Profession of Faith, in which the Dutch Calvinists declared war on middle class businessmen guilty of practicing usury while being lukewarm on religious matters. It legitimated the triumph of an aristocracy of the sword, composed of roughly twenty thousand "guardians of the revolution," fanatically convinced they were a "divine elite called by providential decree to govern and to complete the Reformation in the world and in their homeland."[41] The "saints" who set up the Puritan bibliocracy were "ascetics" in the sense specified by Weber in *Economy and Society*; but they were also totally absorbed in politics and religion which, as true believers, they considered one and the same — and completely removed from a market economy they saw as tantamount to the Kingdom of Satan. In 1647, in Bury, they solemnly proclaimed usury "a scandalous sin, deserving suspension upon obstinacy."[42] In short, the Puritans — in

36. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Calipalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

37. This is how the Puritan Knewstub expressed himself. Another Puritan, Baro, denounced the "usual practice amongst rich men, and some of the greater sort, who, by lending, or by giving out their money to usury are wont to snare and oppress the poor and the needier sort." From R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London: Penguin books, 1972), p. 215. A similar tone can be detected in Baxter: "The rich govern the world and few rich men will be saints . . . . We will have what we will have desired, but not in this world." Christopher Hill, *Il Mondo alla Rovescia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), p. 343.

38. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 304.

39. Michael Walzer, "Puritanism as a Revolutionary Ideology," in Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, ed., *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 129.

40. Herbert Luthy, *Le Passé Present* (Monaco: Rocher, 1965), p. 20.

41. Henry Noah Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* (London: Cresset Press, 1961).

42. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

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perfect harmony with Calvin's teaching — considered themselves "soldiers enlisted for action and for the holy battle,"[43] and not accumulators of capital who believed they were realizing their calling in professional labor.

Furthermore, the Puritan Revolution turned out to be incompatible with middle class society. England only started on its "capitalistic march" once it freed itself from the totalitarian regime of the "revolutionary saints." The Restoration and the Glorious Revolution were a Thermidorian reaction carried out in two phases[44] that disempowered the fanatics and gave England a political regime which recognized as legitimate the elements vital for the development of the entrepreneurial middle class: the independence of civil society before the state; the separation of economic and religious spheres; the juridical protection of private property, and the right to buy and sell according to market laws. All of this had been violently opposed by the Puritan revolution.

Thus throughout the 17th century in English society two different types of civilization clashed. "On the one hand, there was the Puritan ideal of a life that was austere and frugal and distinctly biblical in style, in the spirit of the Old Testament . . .; and, on the other, a culture which contained everything that the Renaissance and Humanism had meant for England."[45] By the end of the century, the second type of civilization prevailed and it gave rise to a modern England, which had received next to nothing from the Puritan culture whose "ideals soon became the object of scorn of every publican," while preachers like Bunyan and Baxter were imprisoned or prevented from doing any harm.[46]

The question here is why was it that "Northern Europe, considered as a whole, got the advantage over Mediterranean Europe, which was dynamic, and had for centuries been modelled by capitalism?"[47] The North did not invent the

43. Lucien Febvre, *Studi su Riforma e Rinascimento* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), p. 201.

44. By "Thermidorian reaction" I mean the successful attempt of middle class society to free itself from the demands of a revolutionary party to subject economic life to the rigid imperatives of a collectivist type ideology.

45. Johan Huizinga, *Dutch Civilization in the 17th Century and Other Essays*, *op. cit.*

46. Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought*, 3 volumes (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1927-1930). "After 1660," wrote Perez Zagorin, "the spirit of the age became radically different. An intensely pragmatic and utilitarian vision ended up by prevailing and with it the explicit and total pursuit of economic ends." See his "L'interpretazione sociale della Rivoluzione inglese," in Ettore Rotelli and Pierangelo Schiera, ed., *Lo Stato Moderno*, vol. III, (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1974), p. 261. Similarly, according to Henry Kamen "the Puritans, a group that was always a minority, virtually predominated in England only in the middle of the 17th century. After that one can say that the English went back to their old ways" (*Il secolo di ferro* [Bari: Laterza, 1985], p. 111). Puritan England, like a Puritan America, is largely a myth. If England had remained under the totalitarian shadow of Calvinist bibliocracy, her fate would have been similar to that of Scotland, i.e., England would have remained pre-capitalist for a long time. Instead, the spirit of the Glorious Revolution prevailed — pragmatic, tolerant and markedly middle class, which "was to be in every field the beginning of modern England" (S.H. Neil, *L'Anglicanisme* [Paris: Seuil, 1958], p. 150).

47. Fernand Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life. 1400-1800*, trans. by Miriam Kochan (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).

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basic tools of capitalism, all of which originated in the South and, in particular, North-Central Italy; nor did it make any discoveries — not America, the route around the Cape of Good Hope, the route to Asia. Yet, at the end of the 16th century, capitalism's driving force moved North. This is not Weber's issue, but maybe Weber was another Columbus, who started out to explain the genesis of the spirit of modern capitalism and was successful instead in explaining a different, but historically more important phenomenon: that it was not a coincidence Northern Europe gained the upper hand over Southern Europe following its conversion to Reformed Christianity.

There may be a causal connection between the Reformation and Northern Europe's economic leadership, but this connection is not the one Weber envisaged. In the first place, though animated by the intention of restoring religious imperatives and stemming the "satanic" forces of capitalism, Protestantism ended up weakening hierocratic power because it replaced a spiritual monopoly with a plurality of competing sects. Moreover, by directly challenging the clergy's function as intermediaries between the faithful and God, Luther and Calvin suppressed the most effective means of regimenting consciousness. Those nations in which their protest was most successful were also freed from the parasitic bureaucracy the Church had painstakingly built, and thus these nations could make a more rational use of human capital. Finally, the success of the Reformed sects was the starting point for the freedom of conscience issue, which was almost completely lacking in medieval civilization and which was to be solved — after atrocious and devastating religious wars — with the institutionalization of the principle of tolerance and the partial secularization of pluri-confessional states.

Together, all of this created one of the essential prerequisities for capitalist development: the weakening of hierocratic institutions animated solely by fear of mammon. In short, the proliferation of sects generated in North and Central Europe by the Reformation thwarted any attempt to establish a new orthodoxy. This coincided with the Catholic Church's introduction of increasingly harsh measures to eradicate heresies wherever possible — in Spain, Italy, Portugal and Belgium. And this is the main reason for the shift of the driving force of capitalism from the South to the North: the Counter-Reformation.

The rapid and spectacular successes of the Lutheran schism aroused great apprehension in the Roman Curia. The spirit of heresy, which had been either squashed or easily absorbed for centuries, was now threatening to destroy the Church. The response was not long in coming. It was a typically totalitarian reaction not only against heretics but against spiritual freedom as such, which Church leaders identified as the *source* of all their problems. Because of their profession, merchants came into constant contact with "infected" countries, they were considered the bearers of negative influences. Thus the Counter-Reformation's reaction had perforce to be strongly anticapitalist.

This reaction would probably not have been successful had the Church not

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found a powerful ally in Spain — a country with an archaic economic system wedded to a pugnacious orthodoxy, and ruled by a highly centralized state. Thus the political alliance between Spain and the Counter-Reformation, whose purpose was to protect Catholicism from contamination, led to the formation of a bureaucratic society based on a re-feudalized economy where the landed nobility gained the monopoly of the means of production and forced the entrepreneurial middle class into exile. As a result, Spanish economic development came to a standstill, despite the huge resources from its immense colonial empire founded by the *conquistadores*. At the same time, Italy, the country which had given rise to modern capitalism and its specific culture, was turned into a colony whose material and intellectual resources were burned on the altar of the power politics of Philip II and his successors.

This is how the religious battle between Catholicism and Protestantism soon became a conflict between two civilizations and two different models of social organization. The Catholic model was monolithic, inquisitorial and bureaucratic-feudal, while that of nations in which the Counter-Reformation had failed to prevent the proliferation of heretical sects was pluralistic, tolerant and middle class-capitalist. This was not because Catholicism was more hostile to capitalism than Protestantism, but because the desperate battle the Church had to wage against heresies mobilized all its energies. The effort to "close" societies the Church was still able to close helped the Spanish state to become increasingly absolute, and gave birth to an antimodernist "Caesaropapism."

But that was not all. While the Church's totalitarian reaction was blocking the economic, scientific and technological development of the countries subject to Spanish rule, it also generated a drain of brain and capital. Trevor-Roper, Luthy, Delumeau and Kamen[48] all have emphasized this. For thousands of businessmen, scientists and technicians, the only hope of escaping from the Church's inquisitional domination was to emigrate. Catholics and Protestants transferred their technical knowledge and capital to those countries in which the Counter-Reformation could not affect them, particularly Holland, which in the second half of the 16th century became a real "asylum." The result was that, while the Belgian economy deteriorated under the totalitarian Catholic Counter-Reformation, Holland became the leading capitalist country. Forced by the Spanish occupation of Antwerp and Gand to emigrate, Catholic businessmen constituted the richest and most dynamic sector of 17th century Dutch society. Moreover, "from every viewpoint, similarities between the very advanced economy of the late Italian Middle Ages and of the Northern European economy during the early modern age are more surprising than the respective differences. The same can be said of the merchant-bankers. A Medici, a Datino or a Fugger

48. Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper, *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (London: Macmillan, 1967); Herbert Luthy, *Le Passé Present*, *op. cit.*; Jean Delumeau, *Naissance et Affirmation de la Reforme* (Paris: PUF, 1983); Henry Kamen, *The Iron Century* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicholson, 1971).

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would have been perfectly at ease with the mentality and conduct of a Trip, a Pels or a Deutz in 17th century Amsterdam. If usury troubled merchants less and less as time went by, this was not because Calvinism had attained its objectives but because it had not."[49] This is another counterpoint to Weber's claim that "even in the context of the greatest capitalist economic development before the Reformation, in Italy and Flanders . . . the capitalist spirit was lacking."[50]

Here some conclusions can be drawn concerning the Reformation's role in the development of modern capitalism. The irruption of Reformed sects definitely produced what Luthy has called the *translatio imperii* of the sciences and productive capacities of the South towards the North.[51] This created the wrong impression that the *source* of Holland's and England's economic boom was due to the superior rationality of Calvinism. As a result, many sociologists came to believe that Weber's thesis contained at least a core of truth, since it explains what other theories cannot. If, however, one focuses on the Counter-Reformation's "scorched earth policy," the shift of the driving force of modern civilization from Southern to Northern Europe can be better explained by other means. It was the logical consequence of the Roman Curia's efforts to contain heresy. By striking against Luther and Calvin, who were threatening its very existence, the Catholic Church eradicated every element necessary for capitalist development by means of the Inquisition — the "absolute weapon" of clerical domination.

The Reformation sought to combat the acquisitive spirit and to stop secularization, but it ended up boosting both modernization and secularization in those countries in which it succeeded. At the same time, with the exception of Venice and France, which rejected the Counter-Reformation, Catholic Europe suffocated under the Church's inquisitorial machinery and the irrational centralizing policy of the Spanish monarchy, and was overtaken by Northern Europe. These paradoxes can be explained without overlooking the endless series of historical facts which contradict *The Protestant Ethic*.

Lastly, one of the strongest witnesses against *The Protestant Ethic* is Weber himself. I have myself drawn on Weber's theory of the genesis of modern capitalism advanced in his monograph on agrarian relations in antiquity.[52] It can be summarized as follows. The "iron cage" of the bureaucratic-managerial state is what, at all times and in all places, has fettered the entrepreneurial middle class and prevented it from carrying forward what, following Marx and Schumpeter, can be called the "permanent capitalist revolution" and which, for better or worse, generated the modern world. Similarly, in Western Europe, it was the

49. C.H. Wislon, "Commercio, Società, Stato," in *Storia Economica Cambridge*, vol. IV, (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), p. 569.

50. Max Weber, "Bemerkungen zu der vorstehenden Replik," in *Die Protestantische Ethik II*, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

51. Herbert Luthy, "Variations on the Theme by Max Weber," in Minna Prestwich, ed., *International Calvinism* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1986).

52. Max Weber, *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations*, trans. by R.I. Frank (London: Verso, 1988).

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breaking up of power which made it possible to free civil society or (and this is essentially the same thing) to generate the communes, which (from Adam Smith on) economic, sociological and historical literature has seen as the "chrysalis of Capitalism."[53] The proto-bourgeoisie, the progenitor of the modern bourgeoisie, was formed in and thanks to them.[54]

It is misleading to explain the formation of modern capitalism and its specific "spirit" by resorting to religious variables. The decisive variables are political, as Weber himself knew. The Japanese case confirms this point. Bellah and Morishima[56] recently formulated a kind of Protestant ethic hypothesis for that country. They emphasize the particular mentality of the "Tokugawa religion" as the crucial variable for Japan's rapid industrialization. This not only explains nothing,[57] it obscures the decisive point, i.e., the particular morphology of political power. Is it a coincidence that the only societies which have generated capitalism endogenously — Western Europe and Japan — were the only societies characterized for centuries by a feudal political regime? Or does this not rather confirm the argument that, in a situation dominated by a bureaucratic managerial state, the minimum conditions for the development of capitalist economy are lacking?

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53. Alfred Weber, *Kulturgeschichte als Kultursoziologie* (Munich: Pipa, 1950).

54. See my "The Genesis of Capitalism" in *Telos* 74 (Summer 1988), where I emphasize Weber's methodological caution. Yet Weber's thesis has been interpreted by authoritative scholars such as Talcott Parsons and Reinhard Bendix as a positive critique of Marxism and of those sociological theories which deny the autonomy of the world of ideas. This is important for identifying the reasons for the success of a completely arbitrary and misleading historical reconstruction independently of what Weber actually meant.

56. Robert N. Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957); Michio Morishima, *Why Japan Succeeded* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

57. In referring to industrialization in Germany and Japan, even a Weberian like Reinhard Bendix has acknowledged that "in both cases religion probably had a secondary role." See his "Preconditions of Development," in Ronald Philip Dore, ed., *Aspects of Social Change in Modern Japan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 52.

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Four Questions Concerning The Protestant Ethic

Guy Oakes

The Following will make certain assumptions, both as a way of foregoing trivial and sterile polemics and to avoid retracing previously ground,[1] I will assume that the reader knows that Pellicani, despite his allegations to the contrary, does indeed employ Luther's philippic against the acquisitive spirit as well as Calvin's denunciation of ambition and greed as support for his own attack on *The Protestant Ethic*. Most important, I will assume that the reader is capable of making an elementary logical distinction: The claim that a thesis cannot be refuted by certain means should not be confused with the claim that this thesis is true, nor should the objection that a critic's arguments fail to dispose of an author's thesis be conflated with the contention that the author's own arguments establish this thesis. Therefore, I will assume that the reader knows the difference between a critique of Pellicani's attack on Weber's explanation in *The Protestant Ethic* and a defense of that explanation. My earlier essay was an attempt to provide the former. Because my remarks were directed to the refutation of Pellicani's arguments and not to the confirmation of Weber's explanation, the reader will also betray no surprise that I did not defend Weber's explanation by analyzing the audience to which the sermons of the Puritan divines were addressed; nor did I write even a single page demonstrating that there was at least one Calvinist preacher who held that the *certitudo salutis* could be achieved through economic success.[2] Given these assumptions, I would like to consider four questions.

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1. See Luciano Pellicani, "Weber and Calvinism," *Telos* 75 (Spring 1988), pp. 57-85 and Guy Oakes, "Farewell to *The Protestant Ethic*?," *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988-89), pp. 81-94.

2. Why does Pellicani hold that such a demonstration is germane to the confirmation of Weber's explanation? It is because he has still not grasped one of the most essential facets of Weber's argument: the paradoxical relation between the intentions of the Puritan divines and the consequences of the actions of Puritan businessmen. On Weber's conception of "the paradoxical attitude of Protestant asceticism," see *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 89-90, 172, and Johannes Winckelmann ed., *Die Protestantische Ethik II: Kritiken und Antikritiken* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1978), pp. 160-61, 299-300.

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I

What is the relation between *The Protestant Ethic* and Weber's subsequent essays on the Protestant sects? Do the latter essays, as Pellicani claims, simply repeat the basic thesis of *The Protestant Ethic*?

Weber's argument in *The Protestant Ethic* to explain the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism may be sketched as follows. (1) According to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, God has chosen a small segment of the human race as recipients of his grace. These he has selected for salvation. The rest he has chosen to damn. Because of the abyss that separates the transcendence of God from the wretchedness and misery of the human sinner, the unalterable *decretum horribile* is ultimately unintelligible to human understanding and incomprehensible from the standpoint of human conceptions of justice. (2) For the generation of Protestants that surrendered to the "magnificent consistency" of this doctrine, the result was a crisis over the most important question the believer had to face: Was he marked for salvation or damnation? In the determination of his fate, "the extreme inhumanity" of this doctrine placed the believer in a state of "unprecedented inner loneliness, with no agent to intercede with God on his behalf — no priest, no sacraments, no Church, no magical techniques for inducing grace.[3] (3) Calvinist congregations as well as the Calvinist ministry, which assumed the daunting task of accommodating this doctrine to the exigencies of pastoral work, found the radical fatalism of the strict teaching of predestination psychologically and practically intolerable. The historical — although not the logical — consequence of the doctrine of predestination was the problem of the *certitudo salutis*: How can the believer attain some confidence about his state of grace? This problem was translated into a question about proof: Are there any criteria by means of which membership in the elect can be determined? (4) "The Protestant ethic" is the name Weber gave to the resolution of this problem produced by the Puritan divines who were obliged to struggle with the human consequences of Calvin's doctrine. This solution held that the believer has an unconditional obligation to consider himself chosen for election. All doubts about one's own salvation are evidence of insufficient faith, and thus an indication of an imperfect state of grace. The path recommended for eliminating doubt and achieving the *certitudo salutis* was intensive activity in a mundane calling: not individual good works arbitrarily produced and separated by lapses into sin, guilt, and uncertainty, but "a life of good works combined into a unified system.[4] The systematization of action around the pursuit of a worldly career was the solution to the problem of proof: "For only by a fundamental change in the whole meaning of life at every moment and in every action could the effects of grace transforming a man from the *status naturae* to the *status gratiae* be proved."[5] (5) As the solution to the problem of proof, therefore,

3. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op.cit.*, p. 104.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

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the Protestant ethic sanctioned the comprehensive and intensive regulation of life that Weber called inner worldly asceticism. As a principle for the methodical control of life, inner worldly asceticism was grounded in both positive and negative imperatives: a positive sanction mandating the systematic pursuit of a calling and a negative sanction proscribing all forms of spontaneity and the relaxation of self-control. (6) The positive sanction entailed a moral premium in support of closely managed and continuous profit-making. The negative sanction entailed an unconditional prohibition against the consumption of these profits or their diversion from the enterprise that the believer, as God's faithful steward, treated as his calling. These consequences of the principle of inner worldly asceticism constituted the spirit of capitalism.

Weber's essays on the Protestant sects explain the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism by means of other premises and on the basis of a different logic. (1) In certain Protestant communities, the ecclesiastical organization was transformed from a church, "a compulsory association for the administration of grace," into a sect, "a voluntary association of religiously qualified persons."[6] This transformation was based on the requirement that unsanctified persons be excluded from participation in the true church. Especially important was the protection of the purity of the Lord's Supper. The communion of true believers would be corrupted and God would be mocked by the admission of unregenerate sinners. Thus membership in the church as sect — the true church — was limited to the congregation of true Christians; in practice, this meant believers who were capable of demonstrating the relevant religious qualifications. In addition, the task of safeguarding the purity of the church, and thus assessing the qualifications of prospective members as well as candidates for its ministry was a joint communal responsibility of all sect members. "Only the local religious community, by virtue of personal acquaintance and investigation, could judge whether a member were qualified."[7] This resulted in what Weber called "the extraordinarily strict moral discipline of the self-governing congregation,"[8] whose members were collectively and individually responsible to God for maintaining rigorous criteria for admission and inflexible standards of sect discipline. (2) This conception of the structure and government of the sect generated a quite different problem of proof. The prospective member was obliged to prove to the congregation of the sect that he possessed the qualities requisite for membership, and thus for election into the true church. The individual member faced the problem of proving to his fellow sectarians that he continued to possess these qualities. Weber characterizes this problem of proof as a matter of "holding one's own" within the congregation of the sect. "In order to hold his own in this circle, the member

6. Max Weber, "The Protestant Sects and the Spirit of Capitalism," p. 314 in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).
7. *Ibid.*, p. 316.
8. *Ibid.*

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had to *prove* repeatedly that he was endowed with these qualities. They were constantly and continuously bred in him. For, like his bliss in the beyond, his whole social existence in the here and now depended upon his 'proving' himself."[9] (3) The necessity of such a proof meant that admission to the sect followed only upon a thorough examination of the candidate. A period of "ethical probation" was required to determine whether the probationer possessed the virtues to which Protestant inner worldly asceticism ascribed a privileged moral status. Thus the practice of sectarian probation together with the moral premiums the sect placed on a life of inner worldly asceticism constituted powerful sanctions in support of the systematic organization and conduct of life in this direction. (4) This mode of life — positive sanctions requiring the pursuit of a mundane calling as an unconditional duty and negative sanctions proscribing all deviations from the requirements of this ethic as evidence of damnation — was essential to the development of the economic ethic that Weber called the spirit of capitalism. The logic of this explanation entails that the individual motives and personal self-interest of sectarians were "placed in the service of maintaining and propagating the 'bourgeois' Puritan ethic with all its ramifications," above all the "specific *ethos*" of the modern *bourgeois middle classes*.[10]

In this explanation, predestination as an explanatory premise disappears and is replaced by premises concerning sect organization and discipline. The logic of the explanation does not turn on the believer's need to prove to himself the state of his grace, but rather his need to demonstrate to his fellow sectarians his possession of the qualities that evince election. Consideration of the two explanations suggests that if there is a factor absolutely essential to Weber's conception of the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, it is not the Calvinist doctrine of predestination but rather the issue of the *certitudo salutis*, the problem of proof.[11] Polemically, it also shows that a refutation of the explanation Weber develops in *The Protestant Ethic* will not necessarily qualify as a refutation of the explanation he offers in the Protestant sects essays.

II

What is the significance of the replies Weber made to his early critics Karl Fischer and Felix Rachfahl? Is it true, as Pellicani claims, that they contain nothing new worthy of note?[12] Since an exhaustive answer to this question is

9. *Ibid.*, p. 320.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 321.

11. Weber admits as much himself. See Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 128, 153, 258n. 192.

12. The extreme polar antithesis of Pellicani's position on this issue seems to be the view of Hennis, who holds that Weber did not state his problematic clearly until he involved himself in these polemics. In particular, his central question, according to Hennis, is not clearly formulated until the final reply to Rachfahl (1910), five years after the publication of the original essays on the Protestant ethic. See Wilhelm Hennis, *Max Webers Fragestellung. Studien zur Biographie des Werks* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), pp. 16, 21. Because I noted that Pellicani ignores this material, he infers, unaccountably,

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not possible here, perhaps the best approach is to consider what Pellicani might have learned and, in particular, what errors he might have been spared, had he taken advantage of these sources. On this issue, four points are worth noting. First, Weber's final reply to Rachfahl (1910) contains a precis of the two explanations of the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism that he presents in *The Protestant Ethic* and the Protestant sects essays.[13] In its brevity, lucidity, and coherence, this summary is unquestionably superior to his previous expositions of these arguments and clearly demonstrates the differences between the two explanations. Second, in his first reply to Fischer (1907), Weber argues that there is no nomological connection between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism, no invariable causal relation "such that whenever *x* (ascetic Protestantism) is found, *y* (the capitalist 'spirit') also occurs absolutely without exception."[14] This means that Weber's explanation cannot be refuted by arguing, as Pellicani does, that Calvinist religious traditions in Norway and Scotland did not result in a capitalist economic ethos. Third, Weber denies that there is any sense in which the explanation of *The Protestant Ethic* is committed to a methodological or philosophical idealism. In his second reply to Fischer (1908), he notes that "*there is no sense* in which the question of the influence of religious movements by economic processes could be regarded as settled by what I have established about the direction in which the *reverse* influence has taken place."[15] Finally, in addressing the objection that the spirit of capitalism can be identified prior to the Reformation, Weber outlines the respects in which the economic ethos characteristic of the Florentine merchants of the early Renaissance is distinctively different from the spirit of modern capitalism.[16] These considerations should have warned Pellicani against the wisdom of elevating the Florentine architect and author Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) to the status of an exemplar of the spirit of capitalism.[17]

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that I "insinuate" that his interpretation of Weber is "basically dishonest," thereby transposing an obvious and relatively innocuous factual point onto the plane of ethics.

13. See Winckelmann ed., *Die Protestantische Ethik II*, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-14.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 29. It should be noted that Weber also repudiates the thesis that capitalist economic behavior can be understood as the product of religious rationalization, an error that continues to enjoy a remarkable currency in the American secondary literature. See, e.g., Jeffrey Alexander, *Theoretical Logic in Sociology. Volume Three. The Classical Attempt at Theoretical Synthesis: Max Weber* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 34-35.

15. Winckelmann ed., *Die Protestantische Ethik II*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

16. See *Ibid.*, pp. 32, 168, 295.

17. Weber's responses to Fischer and Rachfahl also provide a record of important changes in his thought, such as his recognition of forms of capitalist economic organization in Greek and Roman antiquity. See *Ibid.*, p. 186. More important, however, is the contribution these responses make to the clarification of the main problem of *The Protestant Ethic* and a more precise statement of its principal thesis, matters that are framed only informally, and frequently metaphorically, in the 1904-5 essays. Compare Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-75, 78, 90-92, 172, 174, 180 with Weber in Winckelmann, ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II*, *op. cit.*, pp. 29, 46-47, 163, 169, 173, 284-85, 304.

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III

In his "Response," Pellicani wisely discards Godric of Finechale as the paradigm of the spirit of capitalism before the Protestant ethic.[18] However, he less prudently embraces Sombart's thesis that Alberti be resurrected for this purpose. Alberti, Pellicani tells us, defends the virtues of prudence, honesty, methodical labor, and the rational use of time and money in the interest of making life more comfortable. Is Alberti's *I Libri della amiglia* proof of a pre-Reformation spirit of capitalism? This position is open to objections on several grounds. First, these virtues do not have the same significance in Alberti's work that they occupy in the spirit of capitalism. For Alberti, they are prudential rules, techniques for the wise management of business affairs and life in general. For Weber's Puritan entrepreneur, they are moral axioms for the ethical transformation and systematization of life. Alberti elaborates a doctrine of economic prudence or practical wisdom. This doctrine is intended as a judicious approach to the contingencies of life. Its purpose is to maximize opportunities for success and honor. The spirit of capitalism elaborates a moral doctrine. Its objective is to achieve the ethical mastery of the contingencies of life in order to fulfill the obligations entailed by the pursuit of a calling. Put another way, Alberti elaborates a utilitarian success-oriented ethic that employs prudence, honesty, frugality, and efficiency as the most reliable way to happiness. The virtues of Alberti's ethic are hypothetical imperatives that have no binding or obligatory force. On the contrary, they are norms of prudence, the utility of which depends upon their effectiveness in accommodating the indeterminacy and fortuity of life. The virtues of the spirit of capitalism, on the other hand, are categorical imperatives. They are grounded in absolute rules of self-abnegation that subordinate the person to super-personal values which transcend his own happiness, honor, or dignity. Second, these considerations make it clear that the virtues of the spirit of capitalism are not intended to make life more comfortable. The difference between the spirit of capitalism and the economic ethic advocated by Alberti turns on a distinction between two conceptions of wealth. Alberti conceives wealth as a personal possession and a way to achieve creature comforts, security, and honor. Personal wealth is an expression of the powers and the grandeur of the possessor. The spirit of capitalism conceives wealth as capital. The nominal possessor of wealth is nothing more than a trustee. Capital is an object of stewardship, the obligations of which are independent of the possessor's pleasure, comfort, and psychological well-being. Finally, Alberti's ethic does not distinguish the personal or household economy of the businessman and his family from the economy of the firm or the business enterprise. The spirit of capitalism entails that funds are not invested in the person of the owner of a business or his family, but rather in the business enterprise itself. The financial requirements of a business are, in principle, independent of the

18. See my critique of Godric as "emblematic" of the spirit of capitalism in "Farewell to *The Protestant Ethic*?," *op. cit.*

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personal and domestic interests of its owner and his family.[19]

In view of the energy and passion Pellicani devotes to the critique of the thesis that the Protestant ethic was essential to the development of the spirit of capitalism, it is astonishing that, in the final analysis, he denies the historiographic relevance of this thesis, and thus the point of his own laborious attempts to refute it. The spirit of capitalism, as it turns out, requires no explanation, neither on the basis of the Protestant ethic nor on any other grounds. "The culture of modern capitalism," we learn, "was generated spontaneously."[20] Thus it appears that we owe to Pellicani the discovery of an entity for which philosophers searched for centuries: the epistemologically and metaphysically unique phenomenon that qualifies as a *causa sui*. Like the God of scholasticism, the spirit of capitalism is self-explanatory and, therefore, constitutes its own cause. This means that it is senseless to inquire into its explanation or investigate the causes of its genesis. Two points may be entered concerning this bizarre conclusion to Pellicani's struggle with *The Protestant Ethic*. First, since he offers no support at all for his interpretation of the self-evident genesis of the spirit of capitalism, it would be interesting to know how this could be established, especially in view of its vulnerability to well-known and long-standing objections against the concept of a *causa sui*. Second, Pellicani's *causa sui* interpretation does not, of course, prevent him from offering his own explanation of the genesis of the spirit of capitalism as an alternative to Weber's account. Although I will not consider the merits of this explanation here, it should be obvious that Pellicani cannot have it both ways. Either the spirit of capitalism requires an explanation or it does not. If it does, then Pellicani is mistaken in claiming that it was generated spontaneously. If it does not, then his own explanation is otiose and pointless.

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19. For Weber's objections to Alberti as an exemplar of the spirit of capitalism, see *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 194-98 and Weber in Winckelmann ed., *Die protestantische Ethik II*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 168, 295. For commentary on Weber's position, see Gordon Marshall, *In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), pp. 97-99 and Wolfgang Schluchter, "Gesinnungsethik und Verantwortungsethik: Probleme einer Unterscheidung," pp. 216-17 in *Religion und Lebensführung*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988) and "Religion, politische Herrschaft, Wirtschaft und bürgerliche Lebensführung: Die okzidentale Sonderentwicklung," pp. 490-91 in *Religion und Lebensführung*, vol. 2. An English translation of these essays will appear shortly in Wolfgang Schluchter, *Rationalism, Religion and Domination. A Weberian Perspective*, trans. by Neil Solomon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). Pellicani also claims that a pre-Protestant spirit of capitalism can be traced to the practice of 13th century merchants who made charitable donations to the poor in order to insure comparable treatment of their souls in the next world. Against this move, see my analysis of Godric of Finechale in "Farewell to *The Protestant Ethic*?" as well as Weber's discussion of "conscience money," which expressed the attitude of the late medieval church concerning the religiously dangerous qualities of capitalist acquisition as *turpitudo*, in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

20. See Pellicani's "Reply to Guy Oakes," in this issue of *Telos*.

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IV

On what grounds can *The Protestant Ethic* be refuted? The major weakness of Pellicani's attack on Weber is its unvarnished argument from authority. "*All* leading medieval historians have concluded that the capitalist spirit already existed in Europe in the Low Middle Ages."[21] For decades, we learn, "historiography has been saying" that the spirit of capitalism is much older than Weber believed.[22] Indeed, "the vast majority of historians have concluded that there is no positive correlation between the Reformation and the development of capitalism."[23] In fact, "Weber's hypothesis" is said to be "in conflict with everything historiography has ascertained concerning the nature of Calvinism and its long term consequences."[24] In other words, fifty million Frenchmen can't be wrong. I would like to make three points about this strategy of argument.

First, its main premise — that historians have reached near universal agreement concerning the validity of Weber's explanation of the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism — is false. Given the diversity of theoretical positions defended in academic historiography as well as the fact that younger historians generally achieve a reputation by attacking the received views of established scholars, it would be astonishing if this premise were true. Anyone sufficiently credulous to believe that Weber's position is actually in conflict with everything historians have established about Calvinism and its consequences should be encouraged to do some further reading.[25] It would, of course, be very surprising indeed if the main lines of Weber's argument in *The Protestant Ethic* were confirmed by subsequent scholarship. The project was undertaken shortly after a major psychiatric breakdown of some four years. Although the two essays were written at a breathless pace, their composition was interrupted by extended travels in the US. Moreover, Weber worked on *The Protestant Ethic* at the same time that he undertook major editorial responsibilities for the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, a period in which he was also intensively engaged in the most ambitious phase of his early methodological writings. Finally, *The Protestant Ethic* essays remained unfinished sketches. Historiographic and scholarly standards have, of course, advanced considerably since Weber's time.

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21. Pellicani, "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism," *op. cit.*, p. 57.
22. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
25. One might begin with the following short list: Sacvan Bercovitch, *The Puritan Origins of the American Self* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975) and *The American Jeremiad* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Mark Gould, *Revolution in the Development of Capitalism. The Coming of the English Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966); Albert O. Hirschmann, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism before its Triumph* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); David Little, *Religion, Order and Law* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970); Benjamin Nelson, *The Idea of Usury* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

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From the standpoint of contemporary scholarly criticism, the scope of the original essays is much too comprehensive. More important, the range of evidence Weber considers is inadequate, and the quality of the evidence itself, which is primarily anecdotal and based on Weber's own imaginative exercises with ideal types, is much too primitive. No one had a better grasp of the significance of such shortcomings than the man who wrote that science is "chained to the course of progress," with the result that the immanent dynamic of the progress of science and the increasing sophistication of the division of scientific labor will eventually render every piece of scientific and scholarly work out of date.[26] In spite of all these considerations, the contemporary historiographic assessment of *The Protestant Ethic* is much more complex, nuanced, and balanced than Pellicani leads the reader to believe.[27]

Second, Pellicani's strategy of argument calls for a battle of the books, but in the most vulgar sense imaginable: a war of citations in which advocates of *The Protestant Ethic* would be called upon to pit "their" historians against Pellicani's. Whoever ends with the most historians wins? The validity of this method of criticism is evident.

Finally and most important, the main defect of this strategy is its failure to consider the kinds of evidence and types of argument that are relevant to a refutation of *The Protestant Ethic*. Pellicani draws a variety of citations from what he characterizes as "everything historiography has ascertained concerning the nature of Calvinism and its long term consequences," hoping that the result will add up to a refutation of Weber's explanation. As Descartes observed in another context, "as well might a man burning with an unintelligent desire to find treasure, continuously roam the streets, seeking to find something that a passerby might have chanced to drop."[28] Pellicani holds that there is a comprehensive body of historical evidence and argument that refutes Weber's explanation of the relation between the Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. From the fact that the arguments Pellicani uses to support his position are unsatisfactory, it does not follow that his position is also mistaken. Is Pellicani's conclusion perhaps sound, in spite of the quality of the grounds on which he bases it? In order to answer this question, it is essential to resolve two issues. First, it is necessary to understand the position Pellicani proposes to refute. Otherwise, regardless of how much evidence is gathered, its relevance to a refutation of Weber's explanation will remain indeterminate. This was the purpose of my previous essay, in which I argued the elementary point that the validity of a

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26. Weber, "Science as a Vocation," in Gerth and Mills eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-138.

27. For an excellent compendium of contemporary academic historical opinion concerning *The Protestant Ethic*, see Wolfgang Schluchter ed., *Max Webers Sicht des okzidentalen Christentums. Interpretation und Kritik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988); also Jürgen Kocka ed., *Max Weber, der Historiker* (Göttingen: Vandennoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

28. *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, in Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, eds., *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, (New York: Dover, 1955), vol. 1, p. 9.

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thesis can be assessed only if it is correctly understood, and it can be correctly understood only if its author's intentions are established. Second, given an understanding of Weber's thesis, it is necessary to consider the sorts of arguments that are germane to its refutation, a large question that deserves a substantial essay.[29] Because Pellicani has not considered this issue, he finds himself in the predicament of Descartes' treasure seeker, gathering evidence without determining its bearing on the position he proposes to prove.

29. In the enormous body of literature on *The Protestant Ethic* there is no satisfactory account of this central issue in the assessment of Weber's explanation. See Gordon Marshall, *In Search of the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, and his *Presbyteries and Profits. Calvinism and the Development of Capitalism in Scotland 1560-1707* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); Hisao Otsuka, *The Spirit of Capitalism: The Max Weber Thesis in an Economic Historical Perspective* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982); Harmut Lehmann, "Asketischer Protestantismus und ökonomischer Rationalismus: Die Weber-These nach zwei Generationen," in Wolfgang Schluchter ed., *Max Webers Sicht des okzidentalen Christentums*, *op. cit.*; and Malcolm H. MacKinnon, "Calvinism and the infallible assurance of grace: the Weber thesis reconsidered," *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. XXXIX (1988): 143-177, and his "Weber's exploration of Calvinism: the undiscovered provenance of capitalism," *op. cit.*, pp. 178-210.

Max Weber's Two Spirits of Capitalism

Walter L. Wallace

Although Weber does not call attention to the fact (and as far as I have been able to tell, no one else has observed it),[1] *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* argues that not one but two quite different "spirits" of capitalism were generated by the Protestant ethic. It is the normative complementarity between these two spirits, inculcated into different classes of social actors, that Weber claims as a key contributor to Western capitalism as a system of unequal exchange between such classes. Thus, for entrepreneurs, "Everything is done in

1. See, as more recent among many others, Luciano Pellicani, "Weber and the Myth of Calvinism," *Telos* 75 (Spring 1988), pp. 57-85; Guy Oakes, "Farewell to *The Protestant Ethic*," *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988), pp. 81-94; Richard Van Dulmen, "Weber's Thesis in Light of Recent Social History," *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988), pp. 71-80; Paul Piccone, "Rethinking Protestantism, Capitalism and a Few Other Things," *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988), pp. 95-108.

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terms of balances: at the beginning of the enterprise an initial balance, before every individual decision a calculation to ascertain its probable profitableness, and at the end a final balance to ascertain how much profit has been made."[2] But for workers, "not only is a developed sense of responsibility absolutely indispensable, but in general also an attitude which, at least during working hours, is freed from continual calculations of how the customary wage may be earned with a maximum of comfort and a minimum of exertion. Labour must, on the contrary, be performed as if it were an absolute end in itself, a calling."[3] Capitalist entrepreneurs, then, constantly choose means on the basis of their cost-relevant profitability — i.e., their *efficiency*, while capitalist workers apply the cost-irrelevant, duty-bound, *effectiveness* criterion.

Of the Protestant ethic's contribution to the entrepreneurs' efficiency-seeking spirit, Weber says: "What the great religious epoch of the seventeenth century bequeathed . . . was above all an amazingly good, we may even say pharisaically good, conscience in the acquisition of money, so long as it took place legally. . . . A specifically bourgeois economic ethic had grown up. With the consciousness of standing in the fullness of God's grace and being visibly blest by Him, the bourgeois business man . . . could follow his pecuniary interests as he would and feel that he was fulfilling a duty in doing so."[4] Of the Protestant ethic's contribution to the workers' effectiveness-seeking spirit, he says "[N]aturally the whole ascetic literature of almost all denominations is saturated with the idea that faithful labor, even at low wages, on the part of those whom life offers no other opportunities, is highly pleasing to God. . . . Protestant asceticism . . . . created the force which was alone decisive for [this idea's] effectiveness: the psychological sanction of it through the conception of this labor as a calling, as the best, often in the last analysis the only means of attaining certainty of grace."[5]

These two spirits of capitalism, however, depend on different psychological raw materials. Thus, on the one hand, Weber regards the propensity toward *acquisition* as innate, and so refers to "the acquisitive instinct."[6] and claims: "The impulse to acquisition, pursuit of gain, of money, of the greatest possible amount of money . . . . has been common to all sorts and conditions of men at all times and in all countries of the earth."[7] On the other hand, however, he does not regard the propensity to *work* as innate: "Wherever modern capitalism has begun [to increase] the productivity of human labor by increasing its intensity, it has encountered the immensely stubborn resistance of . . . pre-capitalistic labor."[8]

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2. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1958), p. 18.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 176-77.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 60. The sentence immediately preceding this reads: "A man does not 'by nature' wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed

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Thus the psychological raw materials for the entrepreneurs' spirit of capitalism were already present in the human genotype and needed only to be liberated, but those for the workers' spirit had to be inculcated. Consequently, "worldly Protestant asceticism. . . . had the psychological effect of freeing the acquisition of goods from the inhibitions of traditionalistic ethics . . . in that it not only legalized it, but . . . looked upon it as directly willed by God,"[9] but the performance of labor "as if it were an absolute end in itself. . . . cannot be evoked by low wages or high ones alone, but can only be the product of a long and arduous process of education. . . . [T]he chances of [thus] overcoming traditionalism are greatest on account of the religious [Protestant] upbringing."[10]

Now the question arises: In which individuals was the "freeing" of innate tendencies most likely, and in which was the "education" of learned tendencies most likely? Here Weber's central claim is that "the impulse to acquisition. . . . has been common *wherever the objective possibility of it is or has been given*."[11] — thereby suggesting that the early Western capitalist entrepreneurs combined the objective opportunity ("possibility") to exercise their innate acquisitiveness with subjective belief in the divine rightness of doing so.

This becomes an important point when we note that Weber treats capitalist workers as falling into two categories — those who have opportunities to exercise their innate acquisitiveness, and those who do not. For those in the first category, "a *change of calling* is by no means regarded as objectionable, if it is not thoughtless and is made for the purpose of pursuing a calling more pleasing to God. . . . Hence the faithful Christian must follow the call by taking advantage of the opportunity."[12] Not surprisingly, then, "With great regularity we find the most genuine adherents of Puritanism among the classes which were *rising* from a lowly status,"[13] and, accordingly, *changing* their callings. It is only to the second category of workers, then — those in situations having no mobility opportunities — that the Protestant ethic teaches that "labor must . . . be performed as if it were an absolute end in itself, a calling," for "faithful labor . . . on the part of those whom life offers no other opportunities is highly pleasing to God."[14]

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to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose." But for consistency with his reference, on the same page, to "the acquisitive instinct" (see also p. 17), it seems reasonable to interpret Weber as intending to claim that "a man does not 'by nature' wish to earn more and more money" — *if it requires more and more work*.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 170-71.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), p. 129.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic* and the Spirit of Capitalism, *op. cit.*, p. 162, italics added).

13. *Ibid.*, p. 174 (italics added).

14. *Ibid.* It is of some interest to note that Marx's and Engels' theory depends specifically on this category of workers (i.e., those among whom an individual "has no chance of arriving at the conditions which would place him in the other class") to "abolish . . . labor" by "overthrow[ing] the state." Cf. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York: International Publishers, 1947), p. 78.

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Thus (and rearranging Weber's words somewhat but not his meaning) it was "The emphasis on the ascetic importance of a *fixed* calling" that "provided an ethical justification" of labor when the "objective possibility" of upward mobility was believed absent, but emphasis on the possibility of a "*change* of calling" when such possibility was believed present that explained the "self-made man" and his rise "from a lowly status."[15] Everything depended, then, on the individual believing that he was accurately sizing up and then properly seizing, the situation, for "if God show you a way in which you may lawfully get more than in another way (without wrong to your soul or to any other) if you refuse this . . . you cross one of the ends of your calling, and you refuse to be God's steward."[16]

It seems fair to conclude, then, that in Weber's view, when the Protestant ethic spread to the economic institution, it liberated innate acquisitiveness in those individuals who concluded beyond doubt (whether rightly or wrongly, from an 'objective' standpoint) that they were in a situation of opportunity. It did this by positively sanctioning that acquisitiveness with a particular ethic which enjoined dutiful obedience to a divinely ordained calling to become as rich as possible. Such obedience encouraged the continual efficiency calculations mentioned above — which, in turn, could make even an 'objectively' incorrect assessment of initial opportunity bear fruit, for "where it [the spirit of capitalism] appears and is able to work itself out, it produces its own capital and monetary supplies as the means to its ends, but the reverse is not true."[17] By contrast, however, the ethic suppressed innate acquisitiveness in those individuals who concluded (again, rightly or wrongly) that they were not in a situation of opportunity — or, more broadly, did *not* conclude beyond doubt that they *were* in a situation of opportunity. It did this by negatively sanctioning that acquisitiveness with a different ethic which enjoined obedience to a divinely ordained calling to work as hard as possible — and this encouraged calculation of effectiveness only. In all cases, the ethic promoted an unflagging watchfulness for opportunity, while designating both "labor as a calling" and also, equally, "the employer's business activity as a calling."[18] Thus, Weber argues, to the "indispensable ethical qualities of the modern capitalist entrepreneur . . . [was] added the pious worker's special will for work."[19]

So far we have been considering self-interested acquisitiveness as though its objects were necessarily limited to this world. The great and unique power of religion, however, can be said to rest on the proposition that once a world beyond is believed to be real, self-interested acquisitiveness automatically extends to that world as well. Accordingly, Weber argues that not only do religion-supported role differences in the economic institution generate differences in *this-worldly* expectations of the religious institution — such that "[s]trata

15. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, *op. cit.*, p. 163, italics added.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
19. Max Weber, *The Religion of China* (New York: The Free Press, 1951), p. 247.

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with high social and economic privilege . . . assign to religion the primary function of *legitimizing* their own life pattern and situation in the world. . . . What the privileged classes require of religion, if anything at all, is this legitimation . . . . Correspondingly different is the situation of the disprivileged. Their particular need is for release from suffering"[20] — but the same role differences in the economic institution also generate differences in *other-worldly* expectations of the religious institution: "Most important, [the need for religious salvation] may be conjoined with a need for just compensation . . . involving reward for one's own good deeds and punishment for the unrighteousness of others. This hope for and expectation of just compensation, a fairly calculating attitude, is, next to magic (indeed, not unconnected with it) the most widely diffused form of mass religion all over the world."[21]

The net result of all these class-differentiated attitudes toward this world and the next, Weber says, was that the "development of the calling quickly gave to the modern entrepreneur a fabulously clear conscience [insofar as it] gave to his employees as the wages of their ascetic devotion to the calling and of co-operation in his ruthless exploitation of them through capitalism the prospect of eternal salvation."[22] It seems important to note, however, that the entrepreneurs' spirit of exploitation and the workers' spirit of obedience were regarded by Weber as two distinct and complementary role expectations, which made possible the interclass cooperation peculiar to capitalism as a social system — and that they both derived, in different ways, from the Protestant ethic.

20. Weber, *Economy and Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 491-92.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 492.
22. Max Weber, *General Economic History* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1950), p. 367.

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*The Spiritual Impoverishment of the German University**

Klaus Heinrich

Questions dealing with whether "the university still has a spiritual mission," whether it can mobilize "forces of resistance" against the state, and whether "it would not be more appropriate to abandon the idea of the spiritual unity of the university" betray a deep and widespread skepticism. The focus here is on a diagnosis which begins with many symptoms — to proceed as realistically as the ancient Egyptian intellectual who, 3600 years ago, authored *The Smith Papyrus*, a surgical text, and added one of the following three comments to each of his diagnoses: this is "an illness which I will cure" / "an illness which I will fight"/"an illness which cannot be cured." These will be the directives for addressing this crisis.

My generation is astonished by the total loss of eros in the relation between the university and its members. The university is no longer an object of love and hate, as it still was for the student movement of the 1960s. Nor is it defended any longer with the bitterness of the misunderstood. There are no university utopias any more because the university and its problems are no longer matters of public interest. These relations have been de-eroticized. Today the *alma mater* offers only rigorously planned paths into a professional void and part-time jobs. The humanities are no longer attractive. Massive university expansion[1] has been accompanied by withdrawal as students either stay away or spiritually abandon it. With these actions, the students faithfully mirror the relation of teachers to their institution. Why such an exodus?

The catchword, de-eroticization, points up another catchword: spirit. It was first conceived as feminine and only subsequently as male, from the *ruach* of the Hebrew Bible, and the *pneuma* and *spiritus* of the New Testament, up to Böhme's and Hegel's doctrine of spirit. It should not come as a surprise if spirit cannot be found in the present university climate, since it cannot be injected into a dead

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1. When founded in 1948 the Free University of Berlin was expected to accomodate a maximum of 6000 students by the 1960s. Today, at least on paper, it has 54,000 students.

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relation. The de-eroticization of the relation with the university is another expression of spiritual impoverishment. Of course, something else now substitutes for it: research and research projects, planning and planning efficiency promoted by the federal bureaucracy, and the large councils that support young academics.

Scholarly structures organized in disciplines have obliterated the figure of the natural scientist who grappled with nature as both a hostile and an alluring partner. Consequently, research now pursues a completely unexpected career: its object has become as meaningless as reality itself. It is not, however, research itself that merits attention, but rather a prior stage in which all efforts are invested: the "research proposal." The same attention is paid to its elaboration as to the ceremonial preparation of all the equipment and ingredients in a medieval alchemist's kitchen. The term marks a disturbed relation to the future: the future is both reified and declared unattainable. Instead of having something "to do," research proposals are "projected" and "executed."

The new research positivism has a single objective leading it into the already frozen future: planning. And planning, in turn, recognizes only one measure of efficiency: that it be observed, that it not lose track of nor lag behind itself. What is at stake is not social consciousness so that democratic and scientific progress might coincide, but the length of studies, semester class hours, capacity. The specter of relentlessly busy government agencies and the narcissism of planning games, which actively promote masses of "Potemkin villages," stifles real planning initiative. Curriculum planning has come to mean ahistorical planning because it is always yesterday's results that are fixed into the result of long planning procedures. Yet this fetishism of planning and research could not develop if the university still had the task of shaping consciousness. This role was the object of the most violent controversy, great method debates, political interventions in the university, and reforms. What has happened, to render universities as unimportant as they are today? What has made them, in just a few years, so apolitical and so lacking in tension and spirit?

As Rosenstock-Huessy points out in his early book on European revolutions, after centuries of tension between spiritual and worldly powers, the Protestant Reformation brought about a new type of alliance between Throne and Altar. In place of priests, the theological faculties became the spiritual agencies. This role was inherited by philosophical faculties. When they began to support spiritual renewal in the wake of the romantic reform of the University of Berlin after the Napoleonic *caesura*, this role was inherited by the university as a whole. The modernity of the Prussian state, which did not have any archaic legitimation, consisted in its sheer functionality. For the first time, the university raised the question of meaning and answered it with a gathering avalanche of symbol production, fueled by the conflict of methods and schools. Now that the university has forfeited this role, we can easily discern the historical motive. Forms of domination which, in order to work, have to control people, cannot do so directly. Thus they have to rely on extensive symbolic mediation. From the neolithic

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revolution to this day, real power always required an overplay of symbolic power. Intensified by the experience of the French Revolution, the archaic tendencies of political romanticism were following a timely call and answering it was more important than any specific mythological trimming. For this reason, the "conflict of faculties" remained a political problem having to do both with the legitimation and the expansion of the claim to power.

This explains why in Germany the technological reform of the university in the late 1960s and 70s, or its bureaucratic transformation into an administered polytechnic institute occurred so suddenly. Universities as sites of symbol production became obsolete because more effective instruments had become available. The consciousness of individual subjects could become a private matter, despite all the attentive anxiety of the bureaucratic labyrinth. This is today's spiritual scene in the university. Given such total indifference, meant to protect free private space and indiscriminately accept warmhearted as well as cynical conduct, there are increasingly sectarian tendencies: eschatological groups as guests, gurus in partly archaic, partly modern spiritual drapery, and — as if to drive home the fact that real resistance is no longer possible — a "wild thinking." Sprouting among these domestic and exotic weeds is a new variation on the egalitarian principle: a diction that illuminates everything equally and evenly. The peace movement has also experienced this lack of real resistance. Symbolic actions such as sitting in silence on one's own ancestral earth, forming "chains," ceremonial processions evoking the march of the species, no longer annoy or excite state powers. How different is this lack of emotion in comparison to the relatively modest use of symbols at the highpoint of the student movement. Seen in this light, the diagnosis is easy. It is a sickness that cannot be cured. It prefigures a not yet fully understood historical change, namely, the advent of a hegemonic power and control that no longer needs symbolic representations.

Still, this diagnosis is inadequate. What has become of our utopias? How is it that, along with the symbolic-representational spirit required by the state, the critical spirit, the universities' spirit of resistance has also disappeared? What were the hopes of German universities after 1945? Not worried about the presence of spirit after WWI, universities stylized themselves as sites of heightened spiritual life. The slogans were "science and life," "university and life." *Weltanschauung* philosophies were examined and evaluated in terms of their relevance to life. The integration of universities into the Nazi state was the culmination of this trend. Universities became spiritual repositories for a new, i.e., *völkisch* life against a disintegrative (read: Jewish) spirit. Even though they thought they were breaking with it, after WWII universities inherited this practice. Those who came to the university in the winter of 1945/46 with hopes for a fundamental renewal sought the university as a site of spiritual presence that would not recoil from any analytic activity, no matter how destructive. Only in such activities could we find the spirit's power of resistance at work. But "spirit" remained suspect to us, especially since the expression "*Ungeist*" — the non-spiritual aspect of the Nazi period now being displaced by the spirit of tradition — helped to repress one's

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own complicity. The great university reform was coming. It was meant to complement a social reform. Universities were to provide self-consciousness to a society seeking renewal. These hopes were readily dashed. Even the founding of a Free University in the Western sectors of Berlin against Stalinism and fascism did not help. Student unrest turned out to be stronger and more persistent there than in other West German universities because of this original utopia. It should be recalled that it began as an anti-authoritarian protest. It was directed against surviving authorities, the heirs of Nazism, who, from a state of suspended animation, had reappeared in flesh and blood.

The de-eroticization of the relations between the university and the student movement can be interpreted literally. By deploying the symbolic energy at its disposal, the student movement sought to institutionalize a principle of spiritual harmony. The realization of one's own needs — those of the university as an institution and those of society as a whole — were to finally coincide. The resulting commotion did not hinder the state. On the contrary, it enabled the bureaucracy to implement more quickly its technocratic reform. Such a result was symptomatic of a more fundamental development. Now it was no longer necessary to control the spirit of the university — since it was no longer perceived as an oppositional spirit but merely a disturbance, as some sand in the gears. At any rate, whenever erotic relations to the *alma mater* did not cloud the reformers' vision, leading them to chase after the ideal of a fundamental democratic university renewal, these ideals quickly dissolved. At best, they endured only in that eccentric form of Hegel's *Eigensinn*, which is all that remains once binding commonality is reduced to the private sphere.

In the same way that the end of the 19th century saw the nuclear family as the site of central social conflicts, although it was no longer necessary for the economic reproduction of life, so did university unrest make the university, whose institutional significance had become similarly peripheral, into the site for reacting to that shock we are finally recognizing. Spirit is no longer required for social control. That functioning institutions are spiritless was the lesson already learned from the Prussian state. But the state was also heir to an early romanticism, whose dreams of spirit, fantasy and completeness it subjectively needed for its legitimacy, as much as it needed representatives of sovereign authority in all classes and ranks, from secretary of state to counter clerk. The last struggle of the spirit at the university lived off these dreams. Today such struggles simply no longer take place in universities. Freelance elite thinkers have to look for another forum, and the masses of wage-earning thinkers, descendants of the Prussian civil servants of the mind, lose their calling along with their job.

What has become of the spiritual presence that we sought after the last war? Was the desire to be part of it linked to attending the university? Or did we share that wish with society as a whole? Another hypothesis may be closer to the truth. The site of spiritual presence today is the illiterate mass press. The students' campaign against Springer's enterprises was directed against the only serious competition. Since the departmentalizing of education, the mass press is

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the distorted image of that daily self-renewing universality the university can no longer produce and reflects it just as semi-literacy reflects culture.

The old dream of spiritual presence inherent in the Christian God (omnipresence, omniscience, the profound drive of the *deus absconditus*, along with the role of supreme judge) was inherited by the European intellectual. Since the Renaissance, intellectual judgment has displaced divine judgment, and intellect as such has assumed all the godly attributes of spirit. When the Kingdom of Reason failed to emerge, there was a new sober realization. The older notion of the progress of the species gave way to the progress of science which, in turn, was further reduced to the "progress reports" of any proper research proposal. This process marginalized the living subject and stripped the reflective subject of all emotional and affective qualities, even though the spirit, properly understood, denotes vitality and direction. An ancient dream was truncated, as one sees in the success of the mass press. Where else does one encounter such presence, such simultaneity of event, commentary, and judgment, along with affective and moral identification, lived out in an exemplary manner and without qualms? What should such a spiritual presence look like? Could these qualities coexist in a single site that explicitly forms social consciousness? Could the university have been such a site? Yet conscience, *syneidesis*, is such an awareness of division, which remains relentless and irrepressible unless assimilated into the balance of both personality and social constitution. The university's noble task of providing society its self-consciousness today has fallen victim to the general demise of symbols and the university's institutional lack of spirit.

A final detour is necessary, linking seemingly disparate topics such as the mass press (or, rather, the mass media *in toto*) and the history of the species. Only then will it be possible to focus on that contemporary "spiritual illness" we cannot heal but which we can fight. If we can no longer confront it in the university as an institution, then we might at least deal with it in the individual disciplines.

Describing the fascination of the mass press remains inadequate until one points out the constant content: catastrophic events described in newspaper headlines with words and pictures which, like election posters, are set up on public streets. Fascination with catastrophes in comics and film series has marginalized the pornographic genre. This cannot be dismissed as something limited to the tabloid press. Fascination with catastrophe speaks to us out of a contemporary philosophy of the event as well as the transformation of all imaginable public displays into events, from the hallucinogenic effect of postmodern architecture smuggled into street frontages (instead of working at changing life, modern architecture seeks to dislocate consciousness) to "sales" in any department store, the psychedelic boutique and the permanent festival racket of our cities. Diurnal consumption stylized into a series of events and the urge to participate in the latest horrendous events anywhere are all forms of practicing for catastrophe. Here the vulgar and the exclusive spirit meet. Today the exceptional "event" is a code for catastrophe. The exceptional event is beyond disappointment and its absence. Thus it is removed from the real world. Catastrophe

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is reinterpreted as a promise of salvation.

For Kant, a subjectivity potentially inherent in every individual still guaranteed the coherence of the world. But this is precisely what had already become questionable in his system: the functioning of knowledge-producing categories was already subjectless. Their automatism already had a concretely exonerating function. Nevertheless, Kant retained a morally responsible subject. The fascination with the loss of subjectivity, also manifest in the late Husserl, reconciles life and its bureaucratic processing. This is evident in this century's social movements, especially in National Socialism, which presented itself simply as "the movement." The approach to the desired "other" state is always played out in the form of an exchange of subjectivity. The movement I join is the one that seizes me and I want to be taken by it. Behind the mask of the exquisite intellectual event, Heidegger's painstaking descriptions of subject-exchange in the figure of the "turn" indicates the everyday reality of Nazism. The moment the word "event" replaces movement a new totalizing control is achieved, which boasts about its unsurpassability. This is the trademark of the lethal catastrophe.

Three conditions in Germany helped produce this amalgam. First, nationalist (or, more recently, National-Socialist) chiliastic expectations separated from the secretly intended catastrophe and were elevated into a transcendent event. Second, an ancient apocalyptic fascination, with which the central figure of Christian belief and its death were saddled when the awaited end of the world did not take place, which is now constantly repeated and reenacted in the affirmation of faith (at least in the Protestant version). And third, the man-made nuclear catastrophe that almost happened both in fantasy and reality and now has been almost integrated by means of countless anticipations. Even so, this catastrophe is undergoing an important reinterpretation. The fact that it can no longer be physically apprehended except by those immediately affected by it (the lesson of Chernobyl), or that the pressing of the button cannot be physically related to what it triggers, lent nuclear catastrophe an additional spiritual fascination: the presence of the invisible spirit.

First: If the hypothesis regarding fascination with catastrophes is correct, then the analysis and the attempt to change the psychic disposition it produces is a major goal of enlightenment today. This fascination, which has taken hold of an otherwise administered society, cannot be suppressed by another spirit. Instead, it must be transformed into resistance. The university as an institution cannot do this. Once it offered the apocalyptic spirit a theological home, then it willingly accomodated itself to its transformation into an imperial idea, and finally to the latter's lethal execution. Its renewal as a site for spiritual presence went wrong in two attempts with the postwar generation and the student movement. New apocalyptic temptations reached it when the spiritual struggle was extinguished, because the state ceased to regard "spirit" necessary for its own representation.

Second: The question of whether or not the disciplines are still capable of resistance flows out of different premises. Unlike the university as an institution, the disciplines cannot do without reflection. Western science was never the pure

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research enterprise it is depicted as when, today, for reasons of efficiency, it is sold to the highest bidders. It developed as an enterprise against fear — not the existentialist *Angst* that occluded real anxiety, but quite banal material and spiritual fears. A mythologizing romanticism, which today is in the process of being resurrected intellectually, condemned this goal as shallow for the sake of our very survival. Today we are concerned with this ascribed shallow goal in all disciplines. The concept of science has thereby been sharpened and extended: sharpened, because, as among Stone Age people, it concentrates on survival; extended, because the only objective that still counts is the species as a whole. The objects of all disciplines today are determined with respect to these goals, and this objective has taken the place of the "university." The university's tripartite structure — infantilizing pedagogy, in which the student masses only receive what masses deserve; self-administration, which turns its long-term members into functionaries of a central administration, despite the stubbornly maintained facade of university conflict and, finally, research, which is simulated in the university to the extent it is in fact being relocated elsewhere for reasons of expediency and cost — cannot make anything of the species. An enormous non-institutional responsibility has befallen all disciplines. Where they realize this, they form a *universitas invisibilis*. Were it ever to become visible, it would be thanks not to state organisation but to intellectual initiative. For the existing megabureaucratic "university," it follows that its members should behave as if they already stood alone. It is toward these goals that all compromises should be directed. Compromises with a dead institution that provides salaries and office space, but no longer a spiritual echo.

When Helmut Schelsky asked after the war whether self-reflection can be built into an institution and answered "no," he sided with the non-reflective institution. It is the other side of the previously discussed fascination with catastrophe — one of the many psychotic states of affairs today. "An illness which I will fight:" we can no longer say this today as representatives of the university as an institution, but only as individual scholars responsible to the species.

By the democracy of science I do not mean an elitist enterprise, but a general one. This is acceptable to those disillusioned with the university as an institution, especially administrators (who, in Berlin, are called "other employees"). They too have lost some of their self-esteem. They have been cheated of the participation promised by the university reform. They also have to endure the legally dubious procedures of ministerial bureaucracies, changing the constitution-like general principles of university law from case to case for the sake of short-term tactical advantages. Furthermore, reflection of the species in the disciplines could offer another group of members of the university, who today have a very unsatisfactory relation with their *alma mater*, a stimulation to get involved with it in ways other than just career planning and efficiency. Here, I mean the students. Their exodus means that they expect more from their university than it can offer them.

The end of the university utopia, then, is not the end of utopia. Only a period in the history of institutions is over. In this context, instead of trying to save the spirit of an institution, we should try to save ourselves.

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*The Corporatism of the Universal: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World**

Pierre Bourdieu

Intellectuals are not in the habit of submitting their activities to sociological scrutiny — a scrutiny not only of the world in which they presume to act, but also of themselves as intellectuals and of the reasons (or social factors) that determine their actions. Thus the potential novelty of the project that follows: To establish the ends and means of a worldwide collective action by intellectuals, relying on the most realistic analysis possible of what intellectuals are and what they could be. At the risk of utopianism or irresponsibility, it must be emphasized that any ethical or political action by intellectuals will have to be grounded on a rigorous understanding of how the intellectual world operates. Intellectuals are paradoxical beings. An accurate image of the intellectual is possible only after challenging the classical opposition of pure culture and engagement, which is but one of the many false ideas intellectuals have about themselves.

Intellectuals have come about historically in and by their overcoming the opposition between pure culture and engagement.[1] Thus they are *bi-dimensional* beings. To claim the title of intellectual, cultural producers must fulfill two conditions: on the one hand, they must belong to an intellectually autonomous field, one independent of religious, political, economic or other powers, and they must respect that field's particular laws; on the other, they must deploy their specific expertise and authority in their particular intellectual domain in a political activity outside it. They must remain full-time cultural producers without becoming politicians. Despite the antinomy between autonomy and engagement, it is possible to extend both simultaneously. The greater the intellectuals' independence from mundane interests because of their specific

* Translated from French by Carolyn Betensky.

1. At the time of the Dreyfus Affair, French writers, artists and scholars asserted themselves as intellectuals when they intervened in politics *as intellectuals* with a specific kind of authority based on belonging to the relatively autonomous worlds of art, science and literature, and on the virtue, disinterest, competence, etc. associated with this autonomy.

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expertise (e.g., the scientific authority of an Oppenheimer or the intellectual authority of a Sartre), the greater their inclination to *assert* this independence by criticizing the powers that be, the greater the *symbolic effectiveness* of whatever political positions they might take.

The Genesis of the Intellectual

To ground these seemingly preemptory and arbitrary claims, it is helpful to recall the forgotten or repressed history of which intellectuals are the product. This history is extraordinarily repetitive, because the quest for autonomy has been accompanied by a constant shift in attitudes regarding politics — a balancing act between engagement in current events and retreat to the ivory tower. In the 18th century, the *philosophes'* "engagement" (which in 1765 Voltaire opposed to the scholastic obscurantism of decadent academies in his article in the *Philosophical Dictionary* entitled "The Man of Letters") found its logical extension in the participation of "men of letters" in the French Revolution.

During the Restoration, "men of letters" were held responsible not only for the subversive ideas leading to the Revolution, popularized primarily through newspapers, but also for the Terror's excesses: they were looked upon with distrust and even contempt by the younger generation of the 1820s — especially by the romantic poets. In the movement's first phase, these poets challenged the philosophers' prerogative to intervene in politics or to propose rational visions of historical change; they asserted their desire for autonomy by rehabilitating religious sensibility against reason and the criticism of dogma. As soon as the Restoration's reactionary politics threatened intellectual autonomy, however, they once again defended the freedom of writers and intellectuals (as in the case of Michelet and Saint-Simon) and recovered the 18th century *philosophes'* prophetic function (as with Victor Hugo).

Yet another tight-rope act, the populist romanticism which, before the 1848 revolution seemed to affect nearly every writer, survived neither the failure of the progressive movement nor the establishment of the Second Empire. The shattered illusions of '48 led to an extraordinary disenchantment, so strongly evoked by Flaubert in *The Sentimental Education* — a disenchantment which created the conditions for new rejections of engagement. Defenders of art for art's sake such as Flaubert or Theophile Gautier placed "pure" art in opposition to "social art" and "bourgeois art," i.e., art subordinated to the norms of a bourgeois clientele, both in artistic content and reception. Refusing the servitude of "industrial literature" (for purposes other than putting food on the table) and answering to no criticism other than that of their peers, they identified the isolation of the literary field with the writers' refusal to leave their ivory tower to exercise any symbolic authority (thus breaking with Hugo's notion of the poet as *vates* and Michelet's prophetic scholar).

Only at the end of the century, when literary, artistic and scientific fields attained a high degree of autonomy, did the most autonomous agents of these

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autonomous fields realize that their autonomy was not identical with a rejection of politics, and that they could intervene in politics as artists, writers and scholars. In opposition to cultural producers (such as Guizot or Lamartine), who actually became politicians, these agents entered politics with an authority rooted in the autonomy of their disciplines — an authority derived from values at the very core of their disciplines, such as ethical integrity and competence. Concretely, artistic and scientific authority was asserted in such political acts as Zola's "*J'accuse*" and in petitions supporting it. This new mode of political intervention broadened the "purity" and "engagement" constituting the intellectuals' identity. These interventions gave birth to a *politics of purity* — the perfect antithesis to the Reason of State.

The Intellectual: an Unstable Synthesis

The basis for this antipolitical politics was the existence of autonomous filelds whose fundamental law was the rejection of the primacy of economics and politics: the rejection of objectives and values such as money, power and honors predominant in these fields. When Zola took a stand in the Dreyfus Affair, the reversal was complete. Intellectuals were no longer content simply to assert their rejection of mercenary and commercial objectives by extending the limits of their inverted world. They now affirmed their antivalues in ordinary social life, ethics — notably in sexual matters — and politics. From the viewpoint of the defenders of the social order, these were extremely serious *transgressions* (some of these in ethics or politics became the object of court proceedings, both in the cases of Baudelaire and Flaubert, and in that of Zola). Intellectuals asserted their right to *transgress* the most sacred values of the collectivity — most strikingly, those of patriotism and nationalism — by supporting Zola's criticism of the army (or, much later, during the Algerian War, by publicly taking the side of the enemy with the Petition of 121) in the name of values transcending and superseding parochial ones. They derived their authority from the unwritten laws of ethical and scientific universalism in order to practice moral leadership and, on occasion, to instigate collective mobilization in the battle to extend the values of their particulat fileds to all of society.

This overview of the genesis of the figure of the intellectual shows that the paradoxical synthesis of the opposites of retreat and engagement, typical of intellectuals, was neither invented in one shot nor instituted once and for all. This synthesis is unstable and uncertain. It enables the holders of cultural capital to "regress" to one position or another as warranted by the historical pendulum, i.e., to "regress" to the role of pure writers, artists, or scholars, or to that of simple political actors, journalists, politicians, etc. This synthesis also implies that the balance between the two possible attitudes toward politics may be explained by the fact that the demand for autonomy — a demand built into the very existence of a cultural fields — must reckon with temporal powers varying according to the historical moment and from country to country. These powers may lie outside the cultural field (those of church,

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state, and of large industrial or commercial enterprises), or within it, but particularly with those people controlling the specific means of production and distribution (publishers, editors, radio and TV executives, etc.).

Observed variations due to the historical moment or country, which are a function of the relation between the fields and the ruling powers, must not mask the *invariables*, which are the foundation for any possible unity of intellectuals worldwide. The same *will to autonomy* can be expressed in opposite stances (secular in one case, religious in another, engaged here, "detached" there), depending on the structure and history of the powers against which such a will must be contraposed. Intellectuals from different countries must be clear about this if they are to avoid being divided by contingent or phenomenal oppositions stemming from the fact that the same will to emancipation can run up against different obstacles.[2]

In order to master the oppositions that threaten to divide them, intellectuals from different countries must be aware of those transient powers in relation to which they must define themselves. Thus they must learn to recognize, in the work of intellectuals from traditions different from their own (particularly in the more disconcerting or shocking aspects of a work), the effect of past or present confrontations with experiences such as fascism or Stalinism, or with such ambiguous political movements as the '68 student revolts, or generally with politics hostile to cultural activities. When dealing with the universal, there is always the threat of merely articulating a historical unconscious bound to a particular intellectual microcosm.

The Struggle for the Defense of Autonomy

Such an historical perspective also provides a perspective on today's intellectual situation. The embittered abandonment of revolutionary utopias obtaining in France today has already occurred in the past in a number of other advanced countries. The rejection of politics, often associated with a return to religion (which is now taking place in some communist countries) is not new. It is a kind of "endgame" in which every possible move has already been played out and may result in a disenchanted skepticism. This is especially likely in countries like France or Japan, where intellectuals have often run the gamut of possible political positions within one generation. But this situation can also highlight a lucidity which has nothing to do with cynical disenchantment and which, if accompanied by scientifically-obtained knowledge, can generate an absolutely new kind of political activity on the part of intellectuals.

The paradoxical nature of intellectuals creates a situation in which every

2. Here one could cite the example of today's most visible French and German philosophers who, because they pit the same concern for autonomy against conflicting historical traditions, appear to oppose each other in their apparently inverse relations to truth and reason. The same could be said of opinion polls, seen by some Westerners as instruments of domination, and by some East Europeans as a means to attain freedom.

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political action seeking to reinforce their political impact is obliged to follow apparently contradictory guidelines. On the one hand, there is the need to establish their autonomy, particularly by fighting to guarantee cultural producers the economic and social conditions of autonomy (firstly in the form of publication and evaluation of the products of intellectual activity) and to reinforce the positions of the most autonomous producers in each field. On the other hand, there is the need to keep the most autonomous cultural producers from the temptation of the ivory tower by creating appropriate institutions to enable them to intervene collectively in politics under their own specific authority and to struggle towards the minimal goal of guaranteeing their own mastery over their means of cultural production and intellectual legitimation.

Thus the first objective for a movement of intellectuals is to work collectively towards the defense of their own interests and towards the means necessary for the protection of their autonomy. As a consequence of a guilt complex, which has often led intellectuals to become "fellow travelers" — not of the proletariat but of second-rate intellectuals claiming to speak on behalf of the proletariat — intellectuals have often emphasized the defense of major universal causes and rejected the defense of their own interests as merely corporatist, forgetting that the defense of the universal presupposes the defense of the defenders of the universal. Indeed, cultural producers must defend the economic and social conditions necessary for the autonomy of different fields of cultural production — those privileged social universes in which the material and intellectual instruments of what is called science, art, philosophy, law, etc. are produced. They can do this without remorse or moral hesitation since, by defending themselves as a whole, they defend the universal. It should be possible here to provide examples of very precise activities intellectuals should take toward this end, in defense of the republic of artists, writers and scholars: the defense of the scientific researchers' control over their means of production and evaluation by resisting the clutches of scientific administrators who, often excluded from research by their own shortcomings, seek to regulate researchers without having any knowledge of the logic of research; the defense of networks of avant-garde production and distribution in every domain of research, artistic or scientific, against the commercial interests of certain editors; the defense of artists, writers and scholars against the rise of journalism in favor of the elaboration of a deontological code (or of an actual right) to protect authors against misquotations, misrepresentations, etc. One could go on, e.g., with the protection of young professors or researchers against all forms of discrimination, particularly political discrimination.

Reason, that historical product, must be endlessly reproduced by historical efforts to guarantee the *social conditions of the possibility for rational thought* against the transcendental illusion which tends to confine the universal structures of reason in consciousness or language. Transposing the Machiavellian vision, according to which virtue is the product of a public order in which citizens are interested

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in virtue, it is necessary to work tirelessly, with the very practical and concrete means usually left to politicians. It is necessary to pay attention to such areas as the content of educational programs and the defense of educational and cultural television; it is necessary to question that cultural protectionism which blocks the international circulation of ideas, in favor of the creation of a republic of artists and intellectuals whose members have an interest in reason and truth. Against Habermas' universal pragmatics one must propose a *politics of the universal*, a *Realpolitik* of Reason. There is no such thing as a transhistorical universal of communication, but there are socially instituted forms of communication favoring the production of the universal — forms whose logic is already registered in the social logic of public and regulated communication represented paradigmatically by generalizing the kind of exchange that takes place within the scientific microcosm. Here competition, or a *bellum omnia contra omnes* is organized in such a manner that no one can succeed over anyone else, except by means of better *arguments*, *reasonings* and *demonstrations*, thereby advancing reason and truth.

But this world of pure reason has not been brought about by divine intervention. Those who are surprised today by the difficulties encountered by the human sciences, particularly sociology, are forgetting the major battles the natural sciences fought in order to exist and survive. A liberating science can develop only within the context of the social conditions which render it possible. Such conditions presuppose, e.g., the abolition of domination of one nation over another and within a particular nation. These forms of domination can result in the exclusion from scientific competition of those who do not accept the tacit premises of the ruling scientific order — an exclusion which can come about simply as a result of the withdrawal of grants or research credits, or by means of the subtlest sort of censorship from the arbiters of scientific propriety.

It is not easy to institute a rule of measured dialogue, of pure and perfect competition among partners with equal prospects, even in the "purest" of the disciplines such as mathematics, music and poetry. Fields of cultural production have their own monopolies and relations of domination. Real exchanges among scholars and artists may approach the ideal of autonomy and universality only at the cost of great efforts on the part of all involved. Autonomy is increasingly difficult to attain and defend the further one moves away from those fields whose autonomy is protected by both the esoteric obscurity of their products and the absence of directly social "interest" in their stakes — disciplines such as mathematics or poetry — and the closer one comes to such fields as the social sciences which have considerable social impact. If it is not easy to establish rational dialogue, it is due less to the failure of the researchers to control their passions, drives and interests than to the fact that the most autonomous practitioners are endlessly exposed to the disloyal competition of the most heteronomous ones, who always manage to find a way to compensate for their weaknesses by appealing to outside powers. Schopenhauer considered the ultimate form of rhetorical bad faith to argue something which could be settled only by someone unqualified in the field. Economists and, to a greater degree,

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sociologists, face the constant threat of a similar strategy. Thus journalists, writers and second-rate sociologists can count on the support of the majority when they invoke common sense against sociological constructions which, as in every science, challenge common sense.

The struggle for autonomy is thus, first and foremost, a struggle against those institutions and their agents which, from within their disciplines, introduce dependence with regard to external economic, political and religious powers, be they those who subjugate their production to commercial ends, those who make more subtle sacrifices in the pursuit of success, such as writers, or those who exploit their privileged connections to external powers (such as the state or the party, as in the case of Zhdanovism) in order to further their domination of the discipline. Thanks to their activities, extraneous norms replace those particular to a given field of cultural production. This Trojan Horse, whereby heteronomy invades fields of cultural production, is deployed by those who, according to the field's established criteria, are the least appreciated producers and who are always tempted to create alliances outside their fields in order to reverse power relations within them, and are most susceptible to mundane temptations, since they have low expectations. Indeed, if internal recognition does not absolutely guarantee autonomy, it at least protects those it favors against the designs of compensatory powers and against the kinds of revenge those powers may authorize.

These are only the most general mechanisms constantly threatening cultural production. If a conscious and organized mobilization of intellectuals seems essential today to defend the autonomy of cultural fields, it is because this autonomy is in danger or, more precisely, because today the threats to its existence are of a new kind. First of all, consider those threats posed by the state, often just as much out of excessive concern as out of hostility or in order to censor. In societies in which "culture" has become the instrument and the concern of politics (as attested to, among other things, by the existence of Ministers and Ministries of Culture), intellectuals must learn, at the risk of compromising themselves, to use the state to liberate themselves from it, to obtain their share of the goods the state assures them (such as, for academics, the status of functionary, which shelters them from economic sanctions), in order to assert their independence from the state. More to the point, there are threats resulting from the increasing penetration of the worlds of art and science by the world of finance, e.g., the new forms of patronage and new alliances between certain economic enterprises (often the most modern, such as Daimler-Benz in Germany, and the banks) and cultural producers; but also the increasingly frequent appeals on the part of university researchers for outside sponsorship of their research and their eagerness to carry out assignments corresponding directly to the demands of business interests (such as the *Technologiezentren* in Germany and business schools in France).

But the economy's grip over research in the arts and sciences is also felt

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within the disciplines in terms of control over the means of cultural production and distribution, and even in terms of recognition. Those producers attached to large cultural bureaucracies (newspapers, radio, television, etc.) are increasingly constrained to accept and adopt norms (e.g., work rhythms) which they more or less unwittingly tend to constitute as universal standards of intellectual accomplishment (e.g., speed-reading and speed-writing, which are increasingly becoming the rule in journalistic production and criticism). The very division of culture into two markets — obtaining since the middle of the 19th century between the domain of those producers who produce for other producers, and large-scale production or "industrial literature" — may now be threatened. Indeed, the logic of commercial production is increasingly marginalizing avant-garde production (notably, in the case of literature, through pressure to sell books). Furthermore, state patronage, which seems to allow cultural producers an escape from immediate market pressures, actually imposes a normalization of research on the arts and sciences through commissions and committees. This state of affairs calls for a sense of caution as to how poisoned a gift derived from any kind of patronage might be.

The most serious danger, however, is in the tendency to strip intellectuals of their prerogatives to evaluate themselves and their production according to their own criteria. What is most striking in the most autonomous fields of production is that they constitute their own market, i.e., producers have only their own competitors as consumers (as is the case, e.g., in mathematics or in avant-garde poetry or painting). Yet, journalistic criticism and the kinds of economic or political constraints accompanying it tend increasingly to compete with peer judgment: the intellectual field is increasingly the scene of *specific coups*, "media events" — journalistic inquiries meant to manipulate ratings, the honor rolls newspapers publish on landmark occasions, etc., and especially the press campaigns seeking to credit or discredit authors, works or schools. More generally, the reaches of journalism, with its mundane criteria of readability, topicality, "novelty," etc. are gaining on cultural production, primarily by means of the pressures journalism places on editorial practice (the quality of "looking good on television" becoming a standard for the judgment of intellectual competence).[3]

An increasingly significant portion of cultural production is determined by date of publication, subject, title, format, volume, content and style, thus catering to the expectations of journalists who will "create" it by talking about it

3. Patrick Champagne has shown that political demonstrations are successful only to the extent that they are noticed by newspapers and even more by television. Thus their success depends on the extent to which they succeed in attracting the media's attention. A demonstration of fifty medical students who know how to create a "media event," who offer a symbolic demonstration conceived, with the assistance of communication experts, in such a way that it grabs the attention of media professionals, can thus be a more important political event than a trade union demonstration of thousands of participants traditionally organized.

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(when it is not merely the product of people who work in the media and whose signature is sought merely because they guarantee media support). The control of power-brokers over the means of circulation — which confers a kind of legitimation — has not always been this extensive or this profound; and the boundaries have never been so fuzzy as they are now between avant-garde works and best-sellers. One of the characteristics of journalistic judgment is that, for want of the necessary capacities of discernment, journalists systematically mix in their judgements the most autonomous and the most heteronomous producers — the latter being "essays," true doxosophers in the sense of Plato, whose mastery of the art of appearances, like that of advertising agents, pollsters, journalists, etc., allows them to create the appearance of science.

For an International of Intellectuals

The acquisition or reacquisition of the means of guaranteeing or defending autonomy must be the first objective of any action on the part of intellectuals. This action, which may be called corporatist, will not be its own end. It is important to examine how this action might be extended by the intellectuals' intervention in politics and how this intervention might be rendered most effective. These questions seem particularly germane at a time when artists, writers and scholars find themselves increasingly excluded from public debate, even and most especially when it involves affairs under their own jurisdiction. This is the case, paradoxically, at the same time that more and more people (technocrats, journalists, those responsible for public opinion polls, marketing advisors, etc.) ascribe to themselves an "intellectual" authority to exercise political power.

This exclusion is the result of the interaction of several factors. Since access to the higher echelons of large public and even private enterprises as well as to managerial positions in government or administration depends increasingly on the possession of academic titles, intellectuals who once had no difficulty affirming their superiority on the cultural level, though dominated in the economic domain, find themselves confronted nowadays by managers who can presume to rival them even on the cultural level. These "new mandarins" — in the strong sense of the term, since they exercise their power on the strength of their scholarly titles — no longer hesitate to assert the superiority of their technical or economic-political culture over traditional culture, particularly in literature and philosophy. In the name of "realism," traditional culture finds itself relegated to the gratuitous, the frivolous and, in a word, the feminine.

This is how the technocracy, thanks to its hold over the means of mass communication, can exploit its authority to favor generalized irresponsibility, and to send citizens off on vacation. The most outstanding example of this tendency is that of the directors of the French nuclear industry: this "state nobility" — high civil servants and graduates of major scientific schools — obtain an almost unconditional license, full *carte blanche*, from the large majority of French citizens (in France the relative weakness of the ecological movement, and

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especially of the anti-nuclear movement, is well known). In order to understand this extraordinary confidence, it is not enough to point out, as is often done, how effective experts can be at putting possible critics to sleep. Indeed, the basis for the denial of personal responsibility, which today benefits "nucleocrats" and all technocrats who seek to universalize their values of productivity, yield and competition, is none other than the logic of the academic meritocracy, which confers on the happy few an historically unprecedented legitimacy.

Technocrats from both the Right and the Left, as well as all those who seek to reduce politics to *management* problems (problems whose solution is merely a matter of expertise), find willing collaborators in the new technocracy of communication. The latter has been increasingly intervening directly in cultural production by means of journalistic verdicts and the economic effects they trigger. Those who monopolize access to the means of communication contribute, without even realizing it or trying, to intellectual demobilization and, by the same token, to political demobilization. Having actually very few things to communicate, they create a vacuum at the center of an omnipresent communication apparatus. More than mere effects of propaganda or hidden persuasion, these are the false and even true issues, the most everyday of everyday babble that takes up all the symbolic space. The result is a paradoxical symbolic effect consisting in the creation of a vacuum through continuous replenishment.

This is how technocrats and their organic intellectual cohorts monopolize public debate to the detriment of political professionals and intellectuals. Often this takes place with the complicity of the latter who, because of progress in knowledge and the corresponding progress in specialization, refuse to take the stance of the total intellectual. Although old-style intellectual prophesying is to be rejected, one need not choose between being total intellectuals, as created and embodied by Sartre (who feel the right and the duty to take a stand on all the problems of their time, relying only on the force of their intelligence),and specific intellectuals such as Foucault meant them (who limit their interventions to a particular domain of knowledge and experience). What must be invented today are forms of organization which permit the creation of a voice for a *large collective of intellectuals*, combining the talents of the ensemble of specific intellectuals. Excellent models for this already exist in the past (e.g., the Encyclopedists). This means, first of all, the invention of a *model of organization* which, by exploiting every aspect of modern means of communication, such as microcomputers, allows all competent intellectuals to give their symbolic support to well-constructed public interventions. The dilemma of centralism and spontaneity would be resolved by the establishment of a true international network which would take the form, according to the formula of Nicholas of Cusa, of "a circle in which the center is everywhere and nowhere." Each member would be able to propose an intervention that all others would be free to accept or reject. This type of network, with its own organs of expression, could be mobilized against all attacks on the autonomy of the intellectual world,

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and especially against all forms of *cultural imperialism*. It could contribute to the establishment of a groundwork for a true *cultural internationalism*, which would seek to abolish protectionisms and particularisms, thus creating access to universality for the most specific conquests of each national tradition.

But how can one overlook the obstacles to such a collective mobilization? To raise awareness of the common interest, it is necessary to neutralize the tendency inscribed in the very logic of the intellectual field towards division and particularism. Nothing is more difficult than making intellectuals understand that their struggles, even those which stem from purely corporate objectives of only defending their autonomy, can only be collective. They must be collective, because the powers over intellectuals (such as those of journalism) owe their efficacy to the fact that intellectuals are unorganized and in competition with each other (and also because any attempt at mobilization will be doomed to failure so long as it can be suspected of serving an individual or a group). Because of the logic of competition, which pits intellectuals against each other and which, in its most radical forms, makes the producers' worst competitors also their best clients, intellectuals are surely among the least adept when it comes to discovering common interests uniting them (and these interests must be directly endangered, as in England today, in order for intellectuals to see that the trees, i.e., their rivals, hide the forest — the enemies of their rivals who are also their own enemies).

This is an additional reason to ground the corporatism of the universal out in a corporatism geared to the defense of well-understood ommon interests. One of the major obstacles to this awareness is (or was) the myth of the "organic intellectual," so dear to Gramsci. By reducing intellectuals to the role of the proletariat's "fellow travelers," this myth prevents them from taking up the defense of their own interests and from exploiting their most effective means of struggle on behalf of universal causes. Here it would be necessary to indicate what these universal causes might be and to see whether intellectuals are in the best position to define and defend them. Of course, intellectuals have never stopped believing that they are. The celebrated "universal class," be it Hegel's Prussian bureaucracy or Marx's proletariat, was never more than a straw-man for intellectuals who designated themselves as the ultimate judges of universality in their designation of the "universal class." The sociology of intellectuals calls for a more modest redimensioning of their mission.

Clearly, intellectuals have not escaped the universal temptation to universalize their particular interests. A number of their most generous past actions are evidently grounded in their position as dominated dominators or, more precisely, as dominated parties within the field of power — a situation which leads them to feel solidarity with any and all the dominated, despite the fact that, being in possession of one of the major means of domination, cultural capital, they partake of the dominant order.

Must this realistic depiction of the ambiguities that intellectuals owe to their position lead to radical doubt concerning their pretensions to universality?

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Among the historical factors which seem to authorize intellectuals — more than any other group — in their universalist ambitions is that they have constituted themselves as they are in and by their rejection of particularisms. By proclaiming themselves defenders of the universal or, as Husserl said of philosophers, as "functionaries of humanity," they have somehow committed themselves, by means of a kind of collective oath, to a model of the universal intellectual. This model implies duties, or at least the acceptance of sacrifices, which, like hypocrisy, are the homage vice pays to virtue. More precisely, the appearance of a universe such as the intellectual field, where the defense of universal causes (illustrated by the petitions) is traditionally rewarded, creates a situation in which it is possible to rely on the symbolic profits associated with these actions to mobilize intellectuals in favor of the universal. This vision will seem disenchanted or even cynical only to those who want to see intellectuals as a sort of miraculous and exemplary exception to the laws of the social world.

There is one last justification for the relative privilege ascribed here to intellectuals (besides the fact that it is unclear why they should not accord themselves what every other group accords itself, i.e., the right to publicly defend their vision of the world, as particular and self-interested as it might be). Among the specific products of cultural production, there are means of objectification, sociology being one of them, which, by always expressing the interests of this or that intellectual or of intellectuals as a group, offer intellectuals the possibility of becoming aware of the principles of their practices, interests and disinterests, and of their interest in disinterestedness. These tools assure them the *privilege* of being in the position to discover the particular social and economic conditions or, more specifically, the *privileges* underlying their claims to the universal. Thus, on the condition that they know how to exercise it to the limit, this *critical reflectivity* over which they have a monopoly obliges them to associate the pursuit of the universal with a constant struggle for the *universalization of the privileged conditions of existence* which render the pursuit of the universal possible.

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Notes on the Crisis of the University

Claude Karnoouh

Is there a spiritual crisis of the university? The question is not new. It emerges regularly each time profound changes affect institutions entrusted with dispensing knowledge; it crops up everywhere, among professors and industrialists as well as in French state circles whose responsibility is to reduce imbalances between new socioeconomic needs and organizational delays in universities. From this viewpoint, however, the problem remains confined within a sociology of dysfunctions, whose conclusions aim only at adapting an old institution to a new social situation. But since the notion of a spiritual crisis (in the German sense) goes beyond the university, it must be understood as just one facet of the spiritual crisis undermining the Western world in general and Europe in particular. Actually, the notion of a spiritual crisis is simply another name for the general confusion about values and ends typical of the third techno-industrial revolution, which at the same time recovers techno-scientific and socio-economic disruptions. "No future" brutally describes the anxiety-ridden stance of marginalized young generations.

Today the world presents itself as one of information, overabundance and staged events (more or less controlled) that make life a magma of images and sounds penetrating all domains — from geopolitics to intimate sexual fantasies. Information has a way of separating man from all direct experience of the world (however narrow) and finally plunging him into a simultaneity where all references to the past and all images of otherness are sacrificed to the cult of an eternal present — always better than the past.

This is why new communication techniques render obsolete a university whose only *raison d'etre* is the instruction of the increasingly specialized natural sciences. Researchers in applied sciences (with the few exceptions of great scientists) no longer question the goals of their imperious forward march: in the name of scientific progress, the most monstrous genetic experiments allow us a glimpse into the potential for ultimately altering the human species along the selection lines envisioned by Huxley's *Brave New World*. Research and state institutes spend colossal sums for medical feats at a time that preventive social medicine is still far from being considered a minimal obligation. One can expand

* Translated from French by Eleni Mahaira-Odoni.

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on the examples demonstrating the autonomy of techno-science that nothing seems capable of stopping. Any effort to challenge its ultimate goals can only be initiated outside its practico-theoretical orbit — a role hitherto assigned to ethics. But "post-modern" ethics, which today has adopted the language of human rights, is nothing but skillful make-up that masks the right of the stronger to force the weak to submit to the laws of the international commodity market of capital and culture.

If there is a spiritual crisis of society and, consequently, a spiritual crisis of the university, it is because the humanities have been supplanted by media-made social science — a "scientific" version of information-based communication. Professors who 20 years ago thought the university was a privileged place responsible for disseminating knowledge and took a reflective and speculative stance that bore little relation to the hazards and worries of everyday life, now rush to a media-created stage to prove that life has entered the university and that from now on the problem of being in Aristotle no longer constitutes serious thinking by comparison to the latest scribble of some fashionable publicist. What is now called life is nothing but the subjection of all reflection to the imperatives of current events and to consumption which, as we know all too well, coincide with the limitations of common sense practices, i.e., those that satisfy the consensus of triumphant middle classes for whom culture is good only when it can be consumed without effort or worry.

Thus the spiritual crisis of the university coincides with that of the humanities. Nietzsche, with customary vehemence, already stressed this in noting how money and modern science make us forget that culture is first and foremost that which presents itself as useless. What does useless mean? It refers to a culture that does not forge masses at the disposal of political economy or the state. He longed for the ancient Greek type of culture, something which in the end subjects man to things larger than himself. The error (the modern aberration) lies in believing that culture, life, the sciences, must contribute to man's happiness on earth — happiness viewed as the ultimate referent and accomplishment of all.

The humanities are most emblematic of this crisis in that they have always claimed to be the metaphysical and historical foundations of a modernity which confuses techno-scientific progress with the instruments that fuel it — the world as calculation, exchange as capital, work as profit. This is why we must be wary of mystifications regarding the spiritual crisis; far from recent, it lies in the basic premises of all educational systems aimed at mass education and at the creation of ranks of intellectuals entrusted with carrying it out. This is how a category of public servants developed — one of cardinal importance in the constitution of modern states — which invested professors of philosophy with an important mission: the ideological preparation of the nation's cadres and the assurance that the professorial ranks will reproduce by cooptation. In France, the system seems to have been established after the Revolution, with

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the creation of the scientific and technical *grandes écoles* where philosopher-historians taught — men like Volney, who drafted the famous *Citizen's Catechism* for his own courses.

The cause of this decay is not to be sought in the university but in modern society itself, in the sense that the discourse of the state and of economic power no longer hide their will to subject universities to their own needs. In the past, an ambiguous situation obtained. The humanities were supposed to offer a humanist supplement to technology; universities could still claim to be havens for useless knowledge, i.e., knowledge lacking immediate socio-political instrumentability. With the introduction and development of the social sciences (first, history, geography, economics, sociology, psychology, anthropology; later, with their multiple specialized subfields; and finally political science), the immediate needs of state power and of its economic and social requisites demanded to be studied, administered, even created, in an entirely anti-utopian spirit, for the benefit of the *status quo*. Yet it is not until after the end of 19th century liberal democracy and the birth of "post modern" societies in response to totalitarianism that we witness the total demise of university independence and its final and general subjection to state powers, which now view it simply as an efficient means for creating "standardized" mass humanity. This is the case, regardless of the new type of man proposed by particular ideologies: whether it be the proletarian world savior, the teutonic warrior subjugating to his "race" a world of "sub-humans," or the democratic consumer meekly responding to advertising injunctions that falsely lead him to identify his freedom with his buying power.

It is no accident that in 1933 Heidegger, Nietzsche's critical heir, made his famous speech on "The Self-Affirmation of the German University." Even if, to recall his own words, he was guilty of a "great stupidity" by briefly granting some credit to the Nazis (how many mediocre intellectuals pledged themselves to Stalin's cult?), this text still exemplifies the nature of the crisis, i.e., the subjection of the university to the false utilitarian values of the state, and proposes a solution that has yet to be implemented: the re-invention of useless speculation, freed from rationalization to techno-science and from universal mathematization. When, like the Bolsheviks, the Nazis subjected the university to their designs, that was the dawn of today's world; what was then a rough sketch has since become refined and diversified. Today the democratic freedom of education is affirmed through the promotion of so-called knowledge (communication sciences, education, administration, politics, etc.) mouthed to illiterates who, rather than having to think, are simply asked to follow some formulas — which are immediately outdated upon execution and must be changed in accordance with the rhythm of the world market.

Nowadays this totalization of the humanities has assumed a media-created form. In so far as "post-modernity" is characterized, among other things, by the omnipotence of advertising — "the new public space of the bourgeoisie" — the

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humanities, as an instrument for administering things psychological and social, past or exotic, have bowed to this knowledge-power. To ensure public reception, thought has to go on the air or in newspaper columns in the form of recollection, testimony or opinion. But testimony presupposes a substantiating relation between an individual's experience and a truth that precludes the possibility of challenges against it. As for opinion-based thought, for the most part it resorts to sources considered authoritative (for having provided in the university the proof of their conformism) which, under the mantle of their alleged mastery of the scientific nature of social science, are entrusted with distilling the social *doxa* of the moment.[1] A look at ministerial directives on program orientation for French secondary instruction offers enough evidence on the degree to which teaching is subjected to criteria appropriate for journalistic information and helps us understand that the parcels of autonomy meted out to universities only 50 years ago have been gradually withdrawn. As a result, the contemporary model of a prestigious intellectual is personified in the unprecedented figure of the journalist who has built the cult of his media-made celebrity on a crossbreed between a Hollywood star and a sports hero.

We could certainly resort to Kraus' aphorism that "journalism is to truth what palm-reading is to metaphysics" and show its corrosive power, if only we were able to detect in universities some movement, either among students or instructors, calling for the introduction of other types of knowledge. But there is nothing of the sort — professors rebel only when it comes to defending privileges that have been crumbling since media-related professions started questioning their prestige and revenues. As for students (by now well-trained to see in the humanities only knowledge which can be readily instrumental in the labor market), all they ask is easy-to-learn methods and quick exams. Clearly, then, the democratization of mass education, the expansion in the number of universities, the constantly rising number of students, are all an essential part of this modern machine which produces uniform men in order to turn them into docile citizens. Yesterday's brave soldiers, now turned frenetic consumers or sickly unemployed, are getting ready to become tomorrow's consenting victims of the ecological catastrophes menacing the planet. To ask for the intellectual renewal of universities, i.e., to pose new questions about the goals of the march of techno-science, implies beforehand that material well-being is neither a primary nor an ultimate consideration. Who among us could take this in? In the event, when the iron curtain collapses, it takes economists and managers to change the world.

1. Nothing is more grotesque than the sight of famous Sovietologists who, after years of commenting on, demonstrating and proving the immutability of the "evil empire," now find themselves overtaken by events and turn silent. They await a signal from their masters so that they can later reoccupy frontstage by proving how they had always been right. This is a perfect example of the role and work of social science.

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Perestroika *for the University!*

Russell A. Berman

Historians of science and sociologists of knowledge, Marxist critics of ideology and post-structuralist genealogists — and many others — can demonstrate convincingly that the university has never been genuinely and thoroughly devoted to the pursuit of a value-free knowledge. That may well have been a claim, of course, but now the scales have fallen from our eyes and we can see, finally, that something very different was at stake: training heartless bureaucrats for the administrative state, generating master narratives to dominate unsuspecting victims, producing cultural capital for the offspring of the elite, heightening the technical efficiency of an exterminist military apparatus, or just simply feathering the nests of a corrupt professoriate, white, male, and horror of horrors, middle-class. In fact claims like these are, *prima facie*, so indisputably true that, instead of rebutting them, one can only wonder why they need to be asserted so emphatically. Why hawk conventional wisdom as if it were radical critique? A century and a half ago, in a context where the claims of idealism may have appeared minimally plausible, such materialist debunking may have had some oppositional significance. Today that materialism — in an admittedly diluted version — has become the life-blood of a cultural cynicism that cannot imagine a knowledge *not* complicitous with power, a science *not* dependent on the Pentagon, or teachers *not* driven solely by self-interest. Of course the impoverishment of the radical imagination does not make the accusations false; universities have certainly always done things other than pursue knowledge — stage football games, plan imperialist wars, and nurture the alumni networks of the ruling class, to name just a few — but that does not mean that respectable intellectual activity never took place. A critique of the universities that omits the possibility of a life of the mind is, ultimately, just anti-intellectualism; whether it has a right-wing or left-wing inflection is irrelevant. In fact, such accounts are not a critique at all but only a description of a perpetual state of affairs. Criticism begins, however, by calling such states into question.

If the attacks on the university are not groundless, they are themselves not immune to anti-intellectualism, which in turn refracts the whole discussion. A widespread resentment of one's own early experiences in educational institutions is potentially magnified by a jealousy: not so much of specifically intellectual

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undertakings (not everyone wants to be a professional intellectual; there are many other good ways to be human) but of the real or imagined alternative to genuine physical and/or routinized labor. No matter how calloused academics may be, they do not have the callouses of manual labor. For the intellectual, that jealousy can take the form of a guilt leading to convoluted accounts of an alleged mode of productivity effectively equivalent to non-intellectual labor. For example, specious claims that academic studies of the humanities are crucial to the national defense are, ultimately, as opportunistic as was Althusser's Stalinist insistence that theory is a form of practice: in both cases, the crucial distinction between theoretical-cultural reflection and instrumental labor is obliterated — a sort of democratization with a bad faith. It ignores the specificity of intellectual activity which has long been a promise if not always the sole practice of the university. But that ignorance is compounded by the materialist cynicism already mentioned. Strong forces in this society and culture make it extremely difficult to take meaning, signification, culture — more broadly: thought, *Geist* — seriously, now that Yankee ingenuity (more than continental radicalism) has discovered that it is always just self-interested practice. *Ergo*: making a buck is better than thinking a thought (Marx); *ergo*: knowledge is power and might makes right (Foucault); *ergo*: truth is falsehood (Derrida); *ergo*: the university is, for the student, a career-facilitating office, and for the faculty, a shared xerox machine *cum* mailing priviliges. For the government, it is just another client. The truth shall set you free.

The suggestion that the university might have some special involvement with inquiries into truth necessarily sounds extraordinarily quixotic. Contemporary cultural criticism all but disallows the tenability of the goal; the commodification of life-practices produces a loss of faith — the loss of aura — in all cultural objects (and mental projects); and the force of professionalism, for students and teachers alike, turns out to be increasingly incompatible with intellectual commitment. Can one nevertheless rescue the university's project? Perhaps, but only by facing up to its real failings and problems, and, especially by refusing the comfort of a linear historical narrative. To diagnose the current malaise by positing some golden age of the past, when professors were brilliant and students were smarter, is not helpful at all, but only leads to an incapacitating nostalgia. Nor would such an account be plausible, since the university was always problematic in the sense that its intellectual mission was always contaminated by heterogeneous elements: dependence on the state, social elitism, cultural conservatism, etc. The point is rather to identify the particular contradictions in the contemporary university, and between the university and its context, and to formulate a strategy that makes the best out of the real situation without relinquishing a vision that may well be very far from current reality.

It is nothing new to find the university driven in part by the political system. For centuries the Western university had as a primary function the production

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of clerics for the state church and civil servants for the state bureaucracy. If the modern university has grown relatively autonomous in the sense that it is not centrally an accrediting agency for state functionaries, it is nevertheless highly dependent on the state. Especially the Sputnik trauma transformed the university into a recipient of massive funding from the state and interlocked private foundations, a process which in fact began during the progressive era and accelerated through WWII: the American multiversity is, in part, a creature of the welfare/warfare state. This politicization of the university should be understood in a broad sense as an intersection of the academy with the political system (and not simply as a matter of tendentious nuances in the curriculum) and leads to various results: orienting research agendas in the sciences toward defense needs, shifting the humanities toward area studies (cultural studies), and, especially, placing at the center of the university specific practices of project-funding, fund-raising, and a concomitant tidal wave of paperwork. State and foundation penetration of the university began and continues to be driven by a not illegitimate need to modernize an academic community that, on its own, often tends toward traditionalism and immobility. But that same introduction of incentives (grants) not only shapes the intellectual agenda in terms of state interests but, probably even more important, introduces a bureaucratic logic into the university that ends up in conflict with intellectual innovation. It is not at all uncommon today for universities to "tax" outside grants by claiming much more than 50% of awarded funds to cover costs of physical plant and administrative bureaucracy.

Of course universities need funding, but the manner in which the logic of funding transpires evidently has some deleterious consequences, including the accelerated bureaucratization of the institution. Similarly, one can concede that students have legitimate career concerns, but to the extent that careerism becomes the motor of all academic activity, the academy loses sight of its key intellectual obligation. Pre-professionalism is the manifestation of instrumental logic for undergraduates: no thought is worthwhile that does not increase total lifetime earnings. That litany is familiar. On the contrary, that familiarity needs to be problematized. The accusation of professionalism is, more often than not, directed by professors toward students who present resistance to entrenched positions and the conventional wisdom of the academic community. But students are at their best precisely when they do resist and challenge. The last thing one should do is encourage the animus of an older generation sometimes frightened by its imminent successors. On the other hand, those successors are by no means immune to the logic of commodification, i.e., professionalism. The more professionalized students become, the more they run the risk of relinquishing intellectuality, and it is precisely then, in the pursuit of professional privilege, that they are most loyal to their professionalized role models. The priority of professional interests ends up extirpating the spirit: when students are driven more by constructing a professional network of contacts for

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letters of recommendation than by the intellectual validity of their work. On this score, Heinrich's diagnosis, despite the pessimistic conclusions, is absolutely right, while Bourdieu's project amounts to little more than a call for special-interest privileging.

While the professional is the active version of the alienated individual, the passive version is the therapeutic client whose social, psychological and entertainment needs are ministered to by the growing corps of student service personnel. Their goal is to nurture the well-adjusted student who is to be the receptacle of a positive college experience, which may be more a matter of extra-curricular activities than intellectual engagement. To be fair: undergraduates are of course also adolescents, perhaps away from home for the first time, in any case in a new environment, and the university has some responsibility to them. How far does responsibility go? Given the litigiousness of American society, it is not at all surprising to find the unversities expanding that care in order to manage any potential difficulty: the totally administered university results, but the expansion of a logic of bureaucratic administration is ultimately incompatible with the creativity necessary for intellectual innovation. The more the system is under control, the lesser the likelihood of the qualitatively new emerging.

So, not surprisingly, the contemporary American university is rather like contemporary American society: bureaucratized as the price for external funds, professionalized by an instrumentalist ethos, and extensively administered as a therapeutic institution — it might look like an intellectual agenda, a specific responsibility to the mind, already has three strikes against it. But before ending the game, we should take a look at the context of the university, i.e., its relation to other features of society, and especially those which bear on aspects of the university *not* related to its special mission.

Whether or not the university has ever successfully permitted critical thinking to flourish (despite structural impediments like those already discussed), we can certainly concede that it has also done other things: it has articulated ideology i.e., the necessary false consciousness of heteronomous society, usually in the form of positive cultural values or narratives of national identity; it has produced technical knowledge for military and industrial concerns; and, especially in the US, it has contributed to the construction of the habitus of the social elite. These three functions, which 20 years ago could provoke radical critiques of the university as a mechanism of domination, have lost their relevance: less because the university willingly abandoned them than because they are now effectively carried out by other institutions. This reorganization induces a sense of disorientation in the academy, threatened by a loss of its self-understanding. But what is being lost are functions inimical to the core of the university, which could seize on the situation as a unique opporunity to become a genuine locus of critical thought and therefore, finally, make a real contribution to a society debilitated by practical routinization and an endemic hostility to genuine change.

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As the articulator of ideology, the university has been outflanked by the culture industry, no longer just commercialized entertainment but, as the transcendental spirit of the mass media, the real *episteme* of the nation. Moreover, the university has recognized the power of the new challenger. Advocates of high culture are forced to denounce a popular culture which a generation ago they could have simply ignored, while the academic prophets of popular culture parade as radicals but end up doing second-rate PR for Hollywood. (What is, after all, so radical about watching television?) The de Man affair was less about Nazis and Jews than about the anxiety of deconstructive literary critics in elite universities (high culture) that journalists (low culture) were poaching on their turf. No ivy-league professor can have in a lifetime the impact on the false consciousness of the nation that Dan Rather has every evening. Gone are the days of James and Dewey or even Galbraith: this is the American version of Heinrich's complaint — that the project of the Prussian university has been overshadowed by the power of the tabloid press. Is this loss for the university not however in fact a gain? Liberated from the vestigial feudalism of providing the spiritual identity of society, the university — more modestly — can direct its energies to other activities more properly its own: intellectual innovation and free inquiry.

Universities still produce technical knowledge, and the spread of a technical instrumentalist paradigm is, of course, highly problematic. Yet just as the growth of the culture industry tends to relieve the university of its compensatory function (and thereby makes room for a critical function), the multiplication of advanced research institutes, think-tanks, and R&D divisions *outside* the university also affect internal matters. To be sure, problems arise at the borders, as when graduate students try to engage in academic research in commercial laboratories. Yet this proximity is not only a threat. The export of specifically technical or industrial research outside the core of the university might also relieve that core of some of the solely technical demands.

Finally: as a finishing school for the elite, the American university established ruling-class ties, i.e., "old boy networks" — unlike universities in Europe, where an elite of inherited rank and wealth never needed the same academic mediation. Of course, higher education in general in the US usually had very little to do with the elite but was, at best, a vehicle of upward mobility only into the middle class. Yet it is not at all clear that even elite universities at the end of the 20th century are necessary for the reproduction of the social elite: in part because of changes in the character of the elite itself. The Cowboys have finally beaten the Yankees and severed the former connection between the ivy league and the centers of power and wealth. Anyone who still thinks that high culture corresponds to the political elite ought to try imagining Ronald Reagan getting off on Schoenberg. On the other hand, the connection between state power and the symbols of so-called popular culture is indisputable: Michael Jackson at the White House, Reagan at the Grand Ole Opry, and jazz as the

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ideological export article of the Cold War era (whatever the problems may be with Adorno's version of Critical Theory, his refusal to accept the ridiculous equation of popular culture and emancipation remains indisputable).

But the loss of a connection between the social elite and higher education is hardly a loss, least of all from the standpoint of the university. On the contrary, a threefold clearing-away of dysfunctional aspects of the university — the production of ideology, technical expertise, and cultural capital — could well open up exciting prospects: the university as the site of critical thinking which, combining daring and curiosity, could retrieve the enlightenment from its bureaucratic prisonhouse: *aude sapere*. As the prospect of a genuinely autonomous university emerges, alternative agendas are presented all the more vociferously: the culture conservative insistence that the university proclaim positive values and therefore become a seminary; and the left-liberal vision of the university as a vehicle for social reform and therefore an appendage of the welfare state. The point here is not to discuss the status of values or egalitarian social engineering but to express the doubt that the university is the best mechanism to promote either, nor are its own ends best served by their displacement.

What are these ends? Presumably a pedagogic enterpise that has often been at odds with other, less essential university activities. The mainstage of the university is the classroom: not because some back-to-basic lessons are inculcated there but because in the intellectual encounter that takes place there the intelligentsia meets society and both should be engaging in conceptual explorations that can uncover the qualitatively new. The most important product is not new knowledge as reified positive data (leave that to research institutes) but the process of creative imagination, the sparks flying, which are free thought. To be sure, this sort of conceptual freedom is an existential potential in all human activity: the university should be the place where it is pursued most directly. Therefore, the specific contents of curricula are ultimately of much less relevance than the exercise in mental agility. Whether undergraduates read Homer or Alice Walker is not at all as important as how well they learn to read, how sharp they learn to think, and how adventurously they imagine.

This denigration of content, however, is not a denial of content and certainly not a denial of society. The university is engaged with society at its center, with the students. Just as the university no longer needs to produce the master narrative of ideological cultural cohesion, so too does the university find itself dislodged from the socialization narrative of the *Bildungsroman*: the university is becoming less and less the backdrop solely for late teens and twenty year-olds. Instead the life-course involvement with the university is expanding in two directions: continuing education programs for a population growing older; and tentative reach-outs, involving the university in addressing the catastrophic failings of American primary education. This is not to say that the university alone can solve that immense problem, but it indicates, first, a transformation of the scope of the university, second, an assumption of some wider responsibility for

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the educational system, and third, and not least, a potentially more effective strategy to address the low representation of some ethnic minorities in higher education than those pursued so far.

Can one imagine alternative engagments with the social? The university as a locus of autonomous thought but *not* deaf to contemporary issues? Of course, since autonomy is necessarily contravened if some material is arbitrarily excluded, and, especially, the material which is most likely to be so excluded, that is not an argument to eradicate the seemingly irrelevant or exotic; universities have always had nooks and crannies for abstruse material, and ecological sensitivity would dictate that universities make an effort to preserve some of these tiny traditions. The economy of their interaction with more relevant fields will vary from institution to institution, but the point is that the authoritarian opposition between the relevant and the irrelevant is an unacceptable choice: since the university's project is ultimately not a matter of content but of imaginative prowess. It may well be that paradigms from the most esoteric field end up with an impact on solutions for the most urgent problems. To explore such combinations, the university must foster interdisciplinary experimentation. But just as borders between disciplines become permeable, so too is the relation between the university and society subject to change. The academy should not sell out to the highest bidder. Nor, however, can it retain the illusion of innocence (and it was an illusion). The university deludes itself moreover if it imagines itself as an Archimedian point from which concrete society is accessible to pure description or which allows an infallibility of pure prescription. The university can engage with the social (which is clearly much more than the sociological) by not fearing relevance, by not hiding in jargon, and by not resisting accountability. The goal is, after all, not the autonomous university but an autonomous society and it is against that horizon that the value of academic labor ought to be judged.

This may well all still be as utopian as it was a few pages ago. How could the bureaucratized university, with its administrative heavy-hand, loss of self-confidence, and penchant for routinized conservatism become the vessel for autonomous thought? The structural tendencies outlined here may, at best, produce a potential for change. They could be magnified by global developments. Will the bureaucratic multiversity go the way of the welfare/warfare state that brought it into being? The answer depends on the impact of *perestroika* and the end of the Cold War on American society. If the natural sciences have been nourished by the Pentagon and the defense establishment, if the social sciences have been part of a welfare-state agenda, and the humanities a cultural armament on both fronts — Western culture as the culture of NATO abroad and democracy at home — then the internal identity of the university's disciplines is about to become as obsolete as the Berlin Wall. If the university is to survive the peace, it will have to change radically and become less administered and less arrogant, more engaged and more vigorous.

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The Reuniversalization of the University?

Paul Piccone

Recent concern about the crisis of intellectuals and of higher education in the wake of Jacoby's and Bloom's books[1] have failed to trigger any minimal effort at reform — which unintentionally corroborates some of their claims about the demise of intellectuals and the primacy of *Realpolitik* over rational discourse. If universities are likely to undergo major reform it will be, as in the past, in response to broader socio-economic developments rather than because of impotent intellectual challenges from either the Right or the Left. Thus the cues as to the nature of likely changes are to be taken from the way geopolitical dynamics are likely to effect the social mechanisms of cultural reproduction and not from the abstract bitching and moaning of a few disgruntled intellectuals. In all likelihood, the next wave of reforms in US higher education will be an epiphenomenon of major structural adjustments necessitated by the eventual impact of *perestroika* on domestic US politics, e.g., the dismantling of the huge Defense Department budget, the generalization of the lessons of the collapse of Soviet central planning to all administrative thinking, and the repoliticization of the equivalent of a national socio-economic policy hitherto protected from public scrutiny by the secrecy and broad consensus generated by Cold War imperatives.

This is why Heinrich's complaints about the "de-eroticization" of the university[2] as a result of bureaucratization and the growing research-orientation needs to be further historicized and elaborated. The project of university as the guardian of collective self-consciousness was always an elitist professorial pipedream whose realization presupposed the intellectual impoverishment of precisely that broader society Heinrich's version of the "eroticized" academic community, the *alma mater*, was meant to energize and imbue with a spiritual mission — even if he limits such a project to a German society still traumatized by a Nazi experience it has yet to understand. To use his peculiar idealistic lingo, the spirit cannot be incarcerated within academic walls without

1. Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); and Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

2. Klaus Heinrich, "The Spiritual Impoverishment of the German University" in this issue of *Telos*.

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thereby destroying those very creative features that render it vital to any society. This spirit can live freely and productively only if it can constantly breathe the fresh air of *all of society*, thus permeating every one of its institutions, communities, groups — down to single individuals. Within the conflictual context that such a society would inevitably generate, the university thrives not only by systematically reproducing its cultural preconditions in the process of initiating future generations, but as an essential control mechanism by critically evaluating from the viewpoint of a universality attainable only by means of the *via negativa* of unhindered criticism of the various externally-elaborated projects and ideas — what some fashionable French philosophers pompously call "the magma of social imaginary significations."[3]

Such a project of a critical university, however, can obtain only if society is already functioning effectively as an organic whole within which all of its constitutive parts are properly integrated as autonomous entities without any of them being merely marginalized or externally instrumentalized — a situation in which the predominant relations of domination tend to corrupt the vision of both those who dominate and those who are dominated. Today such a state of affairs can only be prefigured, at best, as an imaginary utopian society which has managed to overcome the New Class onesidedness of modernity and the self-destructive nihilism of postmodernity. This is why the project of a critical university is inextricably bound with the creation of the preconditions for its existence. As Karnoouh points out, the spiritual crisis of the university today is, and can only be, nothing other than the academic expression of the broader spiritual crisis engulfing all of Western society.[4] Thus Heinrich's seemingly defeatist conclusions to pack up and leave what is increasingly becoming a despirited academy for a German equivalent of Florida — the comfortable confines of intellectual retirement homes — cannot even accomplish its stated minimalist goal of saving oneself since *private* salvation may still make sense within the remaining ruins of Protestant theology, but is rather inconsequential when it comes to culture and institutions. Rather, the critical task is to try to understand contemporary history and to intervene in it, no matter how limited one's power, in the effort to teleologically redirect its mechanical dynamics. This may be facilitated by the eventual generalization of the epoch-making meaning of the failure of Soviet bureaucratic centralism understood as the collapse of the myth of inevitable bureaucratic domination or the crumbling of Weber's iron cage.

Within such a context, it would be futile or even counterproductive to undertake Bourdieu's project of safegarding intellectuals as the agents of universality by organizing them in a kind of trade-union or lobby to defend their particular interests within an otherwise insensitive corporatist framework.[5]

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3. See Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institutions of Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), trans. by Kathleen Blamey.
4. Claude Karnoouh, "Notes on the Crisis of the University," in this issue of *Telos*.
5. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Corporatism of the Universal," in this issue of *Telos*.

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Genuine universality can never be the prerogative of any particular privileged group without thereby degenerating into pseudo-universality. Bourdieu's insight that intellectuals can effectively defend universality only from the viewpoint of their particular disciplines does not entail his subsequent restriction of what should be a basic social prerogative solely to a self-appointed elite of "intellectuals." As Jacoby has convincingly shown (at least for the US, but increasingly also in France and elsewhere in a rapidly homogenizing Western world), intellectuals in the traditional sense of scholars allegedly commited to truth — however one understands it — are disappearing as a result of their academicization and overspecialization within the increasingly bureaucratized disciplines. Far from protecting their calling as agents of universality, Bourdieu's proposed corporatization of intellectuals will simply extend to intellectuals the debilitating consequences of unionization: the further particularization of their focus to their material interests at the expense of whatever universal concerns they may have originally had. In other words, Bourdieu's proposal is inherently counterproductive in that it would simply accelerate the present process of erosion of whatever residual universality the few remaining intellectuals still find worth articulating. As Gouldner showed shortly before his death, ultimately it is precisely their marginality and precarious social status that renders intellectuals potential agents of universality.[6]

When universality is frozen into the equivalent of a discipline, a method or a positive given accessible only to a priestly elite of officially accredited intellectuals, it inevitably goes the way of a Christianity entrusted to a Catholic bureaucracy during the later Middle Ages. To deploy a theological language which in the age of *perestroika* is becoming increasingly preferable to its discredited Marxist equivalent, it degenerates into *idolatry* (reification, for terminal Marxists) and destroys universality or the Spirit from within more effectively than any of the external attacks to its autonomy Bourdieu fears so much. Contrary to the older Hegel, the bureaucratization of universality not only conceals a fraudulent particularity, but tends to destroy the original particularity of the particular by confusing its identity.

This is precisely what has happened to intellectuals as a result of their academicization. From potential agents of universality, they have been relegated to mere experts in increasingly scientized disciplines. Thus today tenure and its pursuit exclude as a dispensable luxury or waste of time the very possibility of dealing with universality, in favor of a narrow technicization of thought and knowledge. What advances an academic career is not an intellectual's contribution to what Bourdieu calls "the pursuit of the universal," but the technical elaboration of the particular. Since the effective articulation of the particular is possible only in relation to that universality ruled out by the technistic restriction imposed by academic corporatism, the bureaucratization of knowledge and

6. Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).

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research engenders the belaboring of the banal. This is precisely the predicament of practically every academic discipline today. Far from even entertaining universal issues, the university has become a merely *academic* institution in the sense of fostering irrelevance and eccentricity. Most real research today is carried out elsewhere.

Bourdieu's proposal for the unionization of intellectuals is not a project for the future, but an apology for the past: what he describes *has already happened* with disastrous regressive consequences. Every discipline in American Universities has for years fought tooth and nail to defend its autonomy from external inteference, while contributing absolutely nothing to enhancing concern with universality. Rather, the opposite has happened: every discipline has become further fragmented into a myriad of non-communicating subdisciplines. As a sociologist Bourdieu should know that those of his colleagues engaged in *quantitative* research not only do not usually indulge in, but *would hardly know how if they tried*, communicating professionally with their counterparts engaged in *qualitative* research. Worse yet, the logical extension of his corporatist strategy, the politicization of the disciplines, has resulted in the postmodern proliferation of a multitude of self-referential narratives whose very legitimacy is predicated precisely on the denial of any universality now dismissed as white, male and middle-class ideology. The resulting impossibility of deriving any objectively valid criteria of evaluation generates an ideal framework whence to defend autonomy and prevent external interference, but at the price of forfeiting what Bourdieu predicated as their ultimate *raison d'être*.

When all is said and done, Bourdieu's proposal amounts to an academic recycling of the Leninist Party. As the agent of Reason and the mid-wife of Historical Inevitability, the Bolshevik Party also sought to organize intellectuals as the only possible defenders of universality. Although Lenin's intellectuals, unlike Bourdieu's, hid behind the Party rather than honestly advocating their objective interests, the results are roughly the same. The only significant difference is that, up to the very end when they are perestroiked out of existence, the *nomenklatura* upholds its pretenses to represent universality, while academized intellectuals cannot discard it fast enough as soon as postmodernity invades their particular disciplines.

This latest spiritual crisis of the university and the most recent abdication of intellectuals as agents of universality are opposite sides of the same coin. Here it is important to emphasize the contextual qualifier, for in some form or other, the university as an institution has *always* been in crisis and inimical to the intellectuals' unhindered criticism — at least since Socrates was denied tenure and encouraged to pursue another career by drinking the hemlock. The present crisis, therefore, must be interpreted primarily in relation to the trajectory of the welfare/warfare state and its incipient demise. If one glosses over the otherwise crucial pedagogical division of labor within institutions of higher education, i.e., the stratification of academia from the two-year community

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colleges meant essentially to teach minimal skills required for even low-level employment in the age of high-tech — skills that only a few decades ago were expected to be learned in grade school — to the most conceited Ivy League multiversity, it is clear that the present institutional structure is a function of the educational explosion triggered by the institutionalization of the welfare state. The most consequential development brought about by this explosion, which is causally connected to Heinrich's "de-eroticization" of the university and its general loss of spirit, has been the growing importance of research, especially in the humanities and the social sciences. It has led to a demeaning of teaching as such, a loss of universal vision, and a banalization of the level of intellectual discourse as a result of the scientization it had to undergo in order to aspire to that neutrality necessary for its bureaucratic legitimation. Nowhere is this more debilitating than in sociology, a discipline whose fate, more than any other, has become inextricably bound with that of the welfare state.

Although the days when sociology could present itself as a "science" and, as such, legitimate the social engineering agenda of the welfare state are long gone, government-sponsored social research continues to thrive largely because of the time-lag between social consciousness and institutional forms. Even before the scientistic rug was pulled out from under it by postmodernism, thus downgrading it to merely another rather boring narrative among many, the conservative counteroffensive in the 1970s had already effectively demystified sociology as a "science" by showing that it was relatively easy to derive diametrically opposite conclusions concerning any given issue by carefully "massaging" the data and/or defining the appropriate parameters. Thus today sociology is increasingly a self-referential discipline that succeeds in attracting attention only in those rare instances when it makes the headlines and thus it manages to compete successfully with the tabloids — and, even then, what is most interesting is its latent rather than its manifest message.

Consider the recent controversy surrounding a seemingly unproblematic study carried out by "social scientists" from prestigious institutions of higher learning such as Harvard, Yale and Columbia. In the process of scientifically establishing why the rate of marriages among Black women had drastically declined in the last decade or so, one of the researchers' conclusions out of their extensive statistical data was that the likelihood of marriage for middle-class, professional women over thirty were lower than their chances of being the victims of a terrorist attack.[7] Although this is the kind of run-of-the-mill information that in less sophisticated times was freely provided by practically every mother and grandmother to daughters and grand-daughters on the threshold of turning into what used to be derogatorily called "spinsters," its revelation as a "scientific finding" caused a popular uproar.

It should not take another multi-million dollar study by a team of Ivy

7. *New York Times* (November 11, 1989), p. 10.

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League scholars to figure out why. At a time when the culture industry has not only successfully marketed gender homogenization, but also mediatized it through autonomous "progressive" women movements, the most immediate victims of this revolutionary social engineering strategy to subvert traditional institutional forms are having second thoughts about the price they have paid for their "emancipation." Career women, who in the 1970s bought feminist ideology lock, stock and barrel as the quick-fix for every conceivable evil and are now on the verge of middle-age, still single, divorced, separated, childless or otherwise liberated from those binding, allegedly phallocratic, social relations which, however, are a necessary condition for a meaningful life, interpret these "objective" scientific results as confirming their worst fears: their mothers and grandmothers were right all along. Since Humpty-Dumpty cannot be put back together again — especially with menopause lurking menacingly on the horizon — the immediate reaction was, understandably, to attack the bearer of the bad news.

In the present context, what is most revealing about this incident has nothing to do with the correctness of the choices of some of the brightest members of a whole generation of women, but the way it was handled by the original authors of the study. Rather than defending or revising their conclusions in the face of the controversy they had generated, in a re-examination of the results of the project they simply chose to drop that part of the study which had resulted in so much controversy. The justification for this cowardly decision was purely careerist: they wanted to prevent the general public, which (according to them) usually misunderstands "scientific" results, from drawing the wrong conclusions from a research project meant only for their peers. This opportunistic solution exemplifies most strikingly what Heinrich calls the spiritual impoverishment of universities and the results of the operationalization of Bourdieu's corporatist project. Not only does this professional arrogance raise serious questions about the waste of public funds for social research allegedly undertaken purely for the private amusement of a few sociologists, it is indicative of the way bureaucratization and the new post-Sputnik research orientation of American universities has contributed to the cretinization of the professions by sponsoring the belaboring of the obvious and the loss of the universities' historical calling.

For better or worse, ever since at least Galileo's time, when his work in optics was generously funded by the Venetian equivalent of a Defense Department all too interested in the potential military applications of the telescope, research has been inextricably interwined, and therefore accountable to, extraneous social interests. Knowledge for its own sake may make sense as an idle intellectual pursuit, but not as the objective of public-funded research where it can only be justified in terms of a precise cost-benefit calculus and in competition with other possible publically beneficial projects. Intellectuals can moan and groan all they want about their autonomy. Unless they can convince taxpayers and their state representatives of the social desirability of their project,

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they should look elsewhere for funding. Bourdieu's case for retaining and expanding the privileges accorded intellectuals as the agents of the universalization of their privileged conditions of existence is thus far from convincing. If the postmodern critique has accomplished anything, it has been the debunking of claims to universality in favor of an irreducible particularity that only as such, without any further pretenses, can *negatively* contribute to universal concerns.

While standard criticisms of this narrow pragmatism have always pointed out that the radically original cannot come out of such a penny-pinching approach to research, it is even more true that the results of the massive and surprisingly generous funding of social research since the end of WWII have been either banal or altogether counterproductive (e.g., the infamous Coleman study of racial segregation of schools which was not only very expensive, but also intensified white flight from the cities, raised racial tensions, and ultimately had a negative impact either on desegregation or on the quality of minority secondary education).

What this research has consistently done is to lend scientific authority to the social engineering agenda of the administrative apparatus, precipitated the disintegration of traditional unacknowledged social structures essential for the production and reproduction of everyday life (the so-called system's colonization and disruption of the lifeworld), and corrupted the university into merely another business enterprise only tangentially engaged in education. It is well known that academic careers today have nothing to do with teaching but everything to do with publishing and research, that the overwhelming majority of "scientific publications" are irrelevant, boring and purely career-driven, and that Heinrich's ideal of an eroticized academic community can obtain, if at all, only *in spite of* the university as an institution.

Today, nothing exemplifies this more strikingly than the sharp cleavage that exists between the academy and what remains of a public sphere. The first has become increasingly self-referential and concerned merely with its own self-reproduction, while the other has come to be dominated by the new "organic intellectuals," i.e., the prestigious journalists who write and report the news for the national mass media and, in the process, constitute and interpret it. As a result, the university has fallen into irrelevance, while journalism has been elevated to fill a role which it can do only in a very mediocre way. Worse yet, as Heinrich emphasizes, the university has ceased to be an exciting place to work and study; it has lost its erotic component and become another area where careers are made and where what counts most is no longer a sense of calling but, as Jacoby has jokingly pointed out, the assignments of faculty parking spots. In the process, intellectuals in the traditional sense of agents of universality have also disappeared. What has been lost in the process is precisely the university's *universal* character.

This pathological predicament is likely to obtain as long as research continues to occupy the central place that it presently does in the university, while

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public accountability is successfully resisted by invoking autonomy or "academic freedom." But autonomy and academic freedom are to guarantee the life of the mind and not unlimited access to public resources free of all accountability — especially when it tends to destroy those objectives which originally justified it. When the particularity of funded research conflicts with the universality of free inquiry and destroys its preconditions, it may be time to question its desirability and consider a sharp separation between universities as centers of learning and research institutes. Research has become a cancer whose growth has destroyed what it was meant to enliven. It has turned the university from an institution concerned with universality to just another enterprise competing for contracts and whose members are no different from everyone else merely engaged in the pursuit of particularistic career goals. Within such a context it makes no sense to bestow this group with any special privileges. Bourdieu's call for unionization of intellectuals — or a new (the Fifth?) international — can only be met with concrete demands for accountability: what exactly do these people propose to contribute in exchange for what they ask?

The question of the corrosive effects of research is not *academic*, and it is likely to be resolved with the next wave of reforms in higher education. If the welfare state is in the process of giving way to something radically different in the wake of the realization that it cannot deliver what it promises — the lesson of the collapse of Soviet central planning — and its social engineering is largely counterproductive, and if knowledge and culture cannot be allowed to be monopolized by a group of academic mandarins insisting on talking only to each other, the university may be forced to forfeit its pretenses to embody collective consciousness and redimension its vocation to that which it can and should do well: educating future generations and, instead of usurping society's role of creating and recreating cultural forms, act negatively as its critical conscience.

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Reviews:

Exorcising Perestroika

Ferenc Fehér and Andrew Arato eds., *Gorbachev: The Debate* (New York: Humanities Press, 1989), 234 pp.+ vi.

New East European Wine in Old Liberal Bottles

Recent geopolitical developments have exposed, among other things, the theoretical shortcomings and methodogenic inability of much of the liberal-Left academic establishment — increasingly more liberal than Left — to deal with the epoch-making events precipitated by the near-collapse of bureaucratic collectivist regimes and their erratic efforts to undertake fundamental socio-economic reforms. Embroiled in the antinomies generated by a conformist acceptance of the predominant abstract individualism, formalism and New Class ideology (the latest configuration of the most recent unfolding of the dialectic of enlightenment[1]), *soi disant* Left Sovietologists — mostly those of

1. The mystical outcome of Adorno's and Horkheimer's dialectic of Enlightenment shortcircuits what in Hegel's more differentiated account presents itself as *utility*, i.e., the domain where the "spirit's self-dispersing existence" (the multiplicity of individual consciousnesses) unites "truth as well as immediateness and actuality" by deploying "the generic principle" as the "realm of the ultimate inherent nature" (knowledge). Thus the passage from the Enlightenment's absolute freedom into terror is mediated by a phase characterized by the centrality of the *application* of knowledge and, consequently, of those who carry out this function — a technocratic and bureaucratic phase of domination by the agents of knowledge, i.e., the New Class. See Georg W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. by J. B. Baillie (London and New York: George Allen Unwin, 1961), pp. 597-98. Of course, Hegel was writing about the trajectory of the French Revolution while attempting to reconcile it with his account of the ontogenesis of Spirit. Yet his analysis — if sufficiently qualified out of the closed system into which Hegel imprisoned it, and recontextualized in the 20th century as an interpretive model taking into account the major changes that have taken place during the past couple of centuries — helps explain the dialectic of the Bolshevik Revolution and its subsequent Stalinist involution. At any rate, the mimesis with nature that Adorno and Horkheimer proposed in the attempt to counter the debilitating impact of identity logic, in addition to generating insurmountable philosophical problems, implicitly assumed that the structural isomorphism between fascism, Stalinism and the New Deal had already brought about a new age of universal terror. This unwarranted closure was a result of seeing the New Deal through a shell-shocked European perspective, i.e., as a benevolent Hollywood version of fascism and Stalinism, thus failing to realize that the WWII defeat of fascism and the successful containment of Stalinism implied a different historical periodization in terms of which the mediational stage of bureaucratic/technocratic domination may be far from over.

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East European extraction and/or with predilections for communication theory — are seemingly unable to conceive of the very possibility, not to mention the success, of genuine reforms in the Soviet Union other than in terms of the old Cold War dichotomy: rationalization of the existing system of domination or violent revolution. The successful implementation of reforms is automatically assumed to be identical with the modernization and democratization of Soviet society, and failure understood as a return to the days of Brezhnev. The more likely possibility that even the successful implementation of radical reforms will not, in the foreseeable future, bring about substantial modernization, or that failure of the Gorbachev project can only pave the way for *another* Gorbachev, are *a priori* ruled out by a linear theory of history which uncritically associates modernization with progress and failure to modernize with the extension of authoritarianism. Within such a context, progress is seen as predicated exclusively on modernizing *autonomous* mass movements. Since, however, no such thing is on the Soviet horizon (unless directly or indirectly mediatized by the apparatus), state initiated and sponsored reforms — no matter how successful — are readily dismissed as doomed. Far from being the conclusion of a careful examination of how current history is being made and how it is redefining world politics, such a pessimistic conclusion turns out to be generated primarily by theoretical dogma and psychological *aporiae*.

This state of affairs among some recent East European emigrés[2] is not so much a byproduct of their understandable ambivalence and attempt to rationalize what today must appear as a clearly mistaken choice to emigrate shortly before their countries entered the most socially and politically important period since the post-WWII wave of Sovietization (in exchange for the usual obscurity and marginality abroad). Rather, it is the result of a more complex double transposition of recycled liberal political theory and pathological "second world" realities. On the one hand, the peculiar predicament of Soviet-type societies (where, on the false promise of ushering in a qualitatively new epoch, bureaucratic collectivist states have dominated their respective powerless societies) is universalized to apply even to the US, notwithstanding the fact that in the latter a two centuries old tradition of civil liberties and relatively democratic government makes the superimposition of this "state vs. society" model seem embarassingly foreign. On the other hand, warmed-over Western political theories meant to revitalize yet one more time a periodically bankrupt liberalism (kept alive by the catastrophic performance of all other alternatives) are mechanically transposed to an East European context where they cloud the specificity of these societies' histories and traditions by treating

2. For a fairly accurate taxonomy of opinions on this subject, see George W. Breslauer, "Thinking about the Soviet Future," in George W. Braslauer ed., *Can Gorbachev's Reforms Succeed?* (Berkeley: University of Califoirnia Press, 1990 [forthcoming]), who points out the importance of personal idiosyncrasis in evaluating the prospects of Soviet reforms.

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them as mere variants of their Western counterparts, overlooking the debilitating impact of four decades of Sovietization.

Disillusioned with the collapse of official as well as oppositional versions of Marxism, these East European emigrés and their Western epigones (who, for over a decade, toyed with every imaginable form of Western, neo- or post-Marxism) have recently rediscovered the virtues of a movements-based neo-corporatism[3] which they systematically confuse with traditional liberalism and democracy, while embarking on a new career as their most outspoken advocates. Here the Western epigones are even more guilty of theoretical redundancy and obfuscation than these East European emigrés since, by uncritically accepting an East European definition of political problems as universally valid, they have managed to set social and political theory back at least a generation — to the time before the 1960s, when the New Left socio-political agenda assumed democratic institutions as given, although still seen as haunted by their original sin of having been born as the political otherness of a morally suspect capitalism in need of considerable modifications or displacement. This is why the system, which had successfully weathered Cold War hysteria in general and McCarthyism in particular, seemed to have been bogged down in an illegitimate imperialist war in Southeast Asia.

Shocked by the subsequent domestic resurgence of the worst brands of Marxism-Leninism and the never-materialized threat of domestic terrorism in the early 1970s, these Western epigones abandoned all eschatological hopes and rallied around the defense of what they perceived as threatened "bourgeois rights," thus redefining radical politics in terms of the traditional ideals of the French and American Revolutions ahistorically universalized and extended to apply everywhere, any time and to all. They managed to avoid appearing "reactionary" in the precise sense of the term, i.e., of proposing

3. Most recent efforts to reformulate democratic theory reject traditional party politics as corrupt, over-bureaucratized and unresponsive, in favor of "new social movements" as the basic units in a post-Marxist political theory. Since movements usually are concerned with single issues and, therefore, not internally very democratic (or else they would be political parties), they function as corporate groups whose charismatic leadership is often decisive. As a result, much of this "new democratic theory" is *corporatist* in character and by no means inconsistent with New Class ideology. More fundamentally, social movements are undemocratic in that they seek to bypass modern party-politics, within which parties function as the state *in nuce*, in order to circumvent conventional political discourse and normal processes of consensus formation to attract more attention than they would otherwise deserve. Their preferred mode of expression is a *spectacular politics* having nothing to do with established democratic processes, and ultimately presupposing the authoritarian state they otherwise oppose, by unintentionally hypostatizing it to the role of the final arbiter mediating among demands made by the myriads of often conflicting "social movements." It is a matter of minorities seeking to impose their will on the majority by non-rational and often confrontational means without taking responsibility for intended or unintended consequences their policies entail — something left to the state to worry about. None of this can be legitimated by any enthymeme about the disproportionate and undemocratic impact of economic power on the political process.

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to go back to a *status quo ante* rendered obsolete by the advent of the welfare state and the many devastating critiques of entrepreneurial capitalism, while retaining radical/progressive pretenses, by recasting political theory within the framework of anti-totalitarianism and an unmistakeably East European reality where traditional bourgeois ideals are still emancipatory. This is because efforts in these countries to institutionalize a radically redistributive egalitarianism within a context not yet sufficiently prepared by the bourgeois revolution or its equivalent have resulted in bureacratic collectivist regimes which simply perpetuate pre-modern or "Oriental" despotic traditions. This pathological predicament has rendered attractive, once again, older and *de facto* obsolete ideologies which have long since ceased to be relevant in the West in anything but the self-legitimation of liberal democracies besieged by much more complex but more manageable organizational problems.

Worse yet, while the politically educated New Left dared to dream of a qualitatively superior culture grounded on new visions of life displacing necessarily reified older institutionalized forms from the viewpoint of the highest achievements of post-bourgeois society — at least to the extent that worldviews have to be periodically regrounded in concrete socio-historical realities in order to remain viable — these born-again, neo-corporate liberals fell prey to the cultural flip side of technocracy and bureaucracy which, by hypostatizing the privileged post-industrial media of language and communication, could provide no teleology beyond the extension of the given, all the while emphasizing only procedures and formalism. Thus questions of meaning, substance and values were relegated once again to the ghetto of the private, while political efforts focused on mythological institutions or hidden agendas: a public sphere long since colonialized by the culture industry, a "civil society" penetrated through and through by the state since the late 19th century, and professional careers as the only source of personal meaning. Since, in axiologizing discourse and language, born-again liberals never bothered to inquire into the ideological Enlightenment character of previously-accepted Left assumptions about unequal exchange, abstract individuality or linear logic, they remained by default within a vague traditional Left horizon. This political position, however, was no longer "progressive" in that now it only meant defending institutionalized public values seen as gradually eroded by an unreflective Left all too willing to trade the freedom of the privileged for the equality of the rest. Thus born-again liberals today cannot even compete with new intellectual fashions such as post-modernism, which at least succeeded in relativizing what it labeled "Western logocentrism" to allegedly advance pluralism, cultural autonomy and specificity, while actually legitimating more social irresponsibility, academic opportunism and ultimately nihilism.

Communication Theory and Identity Logic

In order to break with their scruffy radical past without systematically rethinking most of their basic positions, all born-again liberals had to do was

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to cleanse their uncritically accepted residual Left heritage of its revolutionary rhetoric and rephrase it in the more acceptable terms of the untenability of "the private appropriation of public wealth" underlying *any* capitalism (advanced or otherwise) and translate it in the currently fashionable communication theory. Thus the way was paved for the now familiar but totally counterfactual scenario of capitalist societies as inevitably running into legitimation crises, which could be forestalled only by shortcircuiting rational public scrutiny of the ethical foundations of capitalism. This is why the repoliticization of the public sphere came to be seen as such a radical project of social transformation for born-again liberals. In terms of their ideological understanding of bourgeois society (increasingly more *civil* than capitalist), capitalism is assumed — contrary to all recent evidence — to be unable to withstand careful scrutiny within a re-politicized public sphere, thus paving the way for at least a new and improved version of existing social democracy. The deradicalized character of this approach is clear even in the way it holds to its radical premises — what has since become Left conventional wisdom. Today's capitalism is theorized as still based on naive 18th century dogma (such as the labor theory of value, unequal exchange, profits as surplus-value, etc.), while crude Enlightenment assumptions concerning abstract individualism, "civil society" and rational discourse are at the same time ideologized to a point where they betray their hidden authoritarian character. Re-dichotomized into "labor" and "interaction," what remains of the New Left recuperation of a pre-Stalinized philosophy of praxis turns into a New Class ideology which re-ontologizes *res cogitans* and *res extensa* while privileging the former at the expense of the latter. Politics and freedom become the exclusive prerogative of the concept and its agents, the intellectuals, while labor, materiality and those structurally screened out of this idealistic self-representation can participate in it only to the extent that they manage to approximate the concept and imitate intellectuals. Identity logic reasserts itself with a vengeance.

These Enlightenment ideal-types end up as authoritarian superimpositions on all of society of particular intellectual identities. Not only do they not readily fit real people, they are generally rejected when forced upon a recalcitrant polity during periods when there are no crises (which explains low voter participation and/or the growth of spectacular non-participatory politics in Western democracies). And rightly so, since the born-again liberals' seemingly magnanimous lifting of everyone to the level of intellectuals, which they either cannot or — more likely — do not want to become, ends up exacting a high exclusionary price. It posits articulate intellectuals able to explicate and defend their views as the only qualified political agents, precipitating precisely that otherwise piously condemned New Class domination by those who can and do participate in the political equivalent of "the ideal speech situation" over those who cannot or do not want to.[4] Worse yet, those who can and do

4. Democratic pretenses to the contrary notwithstanding, here the New Class

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speak hypostatize their linguistically-secularized Enlightenment ideology into necessary liberal principles subsequently functioning as *sine qua non conditiones* for political participation. This arbitrary ascription of liberal aspirations to the same masses they thereby automatically disenfranchise allows born-again liberals to unwarrantedly collapse liberalism and democracy, and to agitprop for the latter while in fact meaning the former.[5] This theoretical sleight-of-hand, which sneaks in the Kantian categorical imperative as a precondition for political participation, seeks to checkmate *a priori* any potentially irrational democratic outcome such as racism, anti-Semitism, or collective religious fanaticism (things the authors of the American Constitution took great care to contain), without thereby resolving the contradiction between a liberalism of inviolable principles and a democracy of absolute freedom.

At any rate, to use fashionable postmodern language, these ideal-types obtain within a particularistic, pseudo-universal Enlightenment narrative which no necessarily circular Kantian speculation can possibly universalize without violating the integrity of subjects forced to endure them as their own. And this is why, despite all the media hype about spectacular demonstrations, of all the popular demands being made today, calls for democratization as such are usually derivative and secondary — even in Eastern Europe — outside of vocal but numerically insignificant intellectual circles. These calls for democratization are usually Trojan horses concealing more substantial demands concerning first and foremost redistribution and standards of living, but also social policy and power relations in situations in which existing ruling elites have lost popular support.

Deducing the Unreformability of Soviet-type Societies

Paradoxically enough, although originally constituted on the basis of an unwarrantedly universalized East European predicament, when re-transposed to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union this born-again liberalism

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ideology of born-again, neo-corporate liberals parallels Leninism (at least, as articulated in *What is to be Done?*) in restricting political participation solely to intellectuals, or to those workers who, through Herculean efforts, manage to sufficiently emulate intellectuals. Here the abstract individualism of Enlightenment ideology clashes with its unacknowledged communitarian presuppositions which it systematically undermines. In Habermas' mystificatory reformulation, the system threatens the lifeworld. Much more concretely, notwithstanding the fact that it was inextricably bound with inter-war communist politics, Gramsci's definition of intellectuals does not rotate around linguistic or communicative abilities but rests solely on communitarian criteria: participation in a teleological emancipatory project *mediated* by "the modern prince."

5. This predicament is not peculiar only to born-again liberals obsessed with Eastern Europe, it is also typical of Rawlsian liberals who, in the impossible effort to square the 18th century democratic assumption of what Rawls calls "the original position" with the liberal welfare state axiom of "the difference principle," usually end up dismissing the former (after initially paying lip service to it) to concentrate on the indeterminate political issues generated by the latter. Rawl's own Kantianism, or the conceptual mush of "justice as fairness," is of no help in this context. The intrinsically undemocratic character of liberalism cannot thereby be swept under the rug.

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turned out to be inapplicable and misleading. All it can do is integrate the dynamics of "really existing socialism" into its one-dimensional Enlightenment view of progress understood as the historical transformation, already selectively carried out by post-industrial capitalism, of *abstract* into *autonomous* individualism (in terms of Western societies, a euphemism for consumerism, narcissism and pre-homogenized heterogeneity) while relegating a state tendentially prefigured as collective consciousness to nothing more than a mechanical aggregation of particularistic interests. Since the state is always more than the sum of its parts, it ends up cast as an ineradicable and inherently evil Other on which social movements constituting a permanently fragmented "civil society" can only make demands, without either displacing or rendering it non-adversarial. The identification of these demands for well-being, civil liberties and other social values with "democracy," at best an historical contingency, allowed born-again liberals to interpret demands for the former as a universal call for democratization. Since Soviet-type societies are not readily amenable to democratization without risking their very social identity, and popular demands are really for what democratization should but does not necessarily (or, at least, not immediately) facilitate, i.e., higher standards of living, born-again liberals cannot conceive of the possibility of radical systemic reforms in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Similarly, a cheap democratization of either the Party or society *without* modernization (whose preconditions have been severely eroded by Sovietization) — what is actually happening — is automatically ruled out.

The problem with such a demonic/paternalistic interpretation of the state is that the immediate austerity measures required by radical reforms in order to bring about long-term economic rationalization presuppose destabilizing existing institutional relations whose most immediate counterproductive impact is further economic disorganization and decline. Any such program cannot be imposed by an already seriously delegitimated Party/state, lest it trigger unmanageable and economically devastating social resistance (such as the Soviet miners' strikes in the summer of 1989, or the Polish workers' passive resistence in the first half of the 1980s); nor can it be expected to be demanded by those who are going to bear its most severe consequences. Since born-again liberals cannot conceive of the gradual dissolution of the existing state apparatus, they consider attempts at reform as doomed *a priori*. To use a more fashionable terminology, the imposition of austerity programs cannot come "from below," since in these societies (however born-again liberals interpret their often-used rigorous scientific category "below") "civil society" had been so thoroughly colonized by its logical counterpart "above" that all responsibility for economic problems is understandably rejected. Similarly, demands for real reforms cannot come from "above" (other than in the trivial sense of streamlining the existing irrational system), since they would radically alter power relations and, allegedly, no ruling class undermines its own power-base. Consequently, *perestroika* and *glasnost* are dismissed as either PR shams or already doomed, misbegotten projects rating no better than similar earlier

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efforts by, e.g., Khrushchev. This conclusion, however, is only the result of the Manichean separation of state and society generated by the mechanistic 18th century ideology of born-again liberals. A more modulated understanding of the relation between state and society as continuous and dialectical would readily generate a different and more realistic analysis, whereby the chaos precipitated by reforms eventually necessitates historically new configurations at the state as well as at the society level.

The Disintegration of the Soviet Empire and the Eventual Demise of the New Class

This bizarre, methodogenic dismissal of the most important event in the last half of the 20th century as an "interlude," a "phenomenon," or an equally irrelevant curiosity has other self-serving implications whose ultimate function is to legitimate born-again liberal historiography and politics. It deflects at least two considerations which raise serious doubts about the need for democratization that born-again liberals have successfully marketed as the *sine qua non conditio* for economic revival in order to legitimate the *de facto* New Class domination they simultaneously attack and benefit from: 1) the extent to which the collapse of the bureaucratic collectivist model has been precipitated by US remilitarization in the early 1980s (the intensification of military Keynesianism and the deployment of SDI research) which, combined with the consequent vigorous economic performance by all advanced industrial societies in the "first world," proved too overwhelming for a tendentially stagnant "second world" to even come close in matching; and 2) the implication of the collapse of this bureaucratic collectivist model, predicated on central planning and rational redistribution, and not simply for authoritarian communist regimes but for the managerial state in general. Both these considerations challenge born-again liberals' conventional wisdom.

The first throws doubt on the claims that democratization as such, or the reconstitution of a mythological "civil society," is a necessary pre-condition for economic growth and social well-being and, consequently, for real political legitimation of a post-socialist regime. What this means is that East European economies first and foremost need *capitalism*. Any kind of democratization or complementary bourgeois institutions come in only as preconditions for capitalist development. According to Left and born-again liberal pseudo-populism, to the extent that conservatism does not seek to broaden the democratic base, it cannot obtain the consensus necessary to motivate and mobilize people around social projects conducive to a healthy economic life. In the 1980s, however, the Right in the West did just that in a context where "civil society" has long since been thoroughly penetrated and deactivated by the culture industry. Consequently, democratization may not be the medicine required to cure East European or Soviet economic illnesses; certainly not the only one.

The second raises questions concerning the role of intellectuals, technocrats and bureaucrats not only in running society but also in defining issues and "the public good," and particularly in substituting liberalism for democracy by,

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e.g., restricting the latter merely to consensus-formation through "undistorted communication" among idle intellectuals. The bottom line is that, contrary to born-again liberalism, democracy is only a *means* dispensable if and when the predominant socio-economic system is able to guarantee certain other more desirable values such as relatively high living standards, security, civil liberties, etc. When ruling elites cannot deliver, then demands for democratization arise as challenges to all authorities whose legitimation was a function of alleged political or "scientific" competence. When the New Class stops delivering the bacon, its expertise and publicly supported privileges turn into merely obstacles to new projects of social reconstruction.

This predicament ultimately deflates the political pretenses of born-again liberals: if the managerial state *as such* cannot efficiently manage society, if central planning is a rationalist Enlightenment dream that turns into a nightmare not only when enforced by the security police and the Party-state but also when administered by New Deal or Social-Democratic bureaucrats, then the very notion of an autonomous steering agency staffed by democratically legitimated (or, more precisely, mediatizing) New Class "experts," who thereby exercise a new form of domination, becomes suspect. Contrary to born-again liberalism, the success of the conservative anti-bureaucratic offensive, even if limited to rhetoric, drives home the fact that the negative connotations of the administrative apparatus are not merely a function of its *democratic legitimacy* but of its very being as an administrative apparatus *constituted by* experts, technocrats, bureaucrats and intellectuals claiming to know better what is best and how to do things for their clientized constituencies. If instrumental and formal reason are inadequate to administer a society whose full complexity necessarily escapes any plan that does not allow ample latitude for that which cannot be reduced to manipulable figures or exhaustively captured by conceptual constructs, then intellectuals, as agents of instrumental rationality, lose their privileged roles. Within such a context, their sophisticated theoretical deductions deflate to what they always were: mere opinions with scientific pretenses to an authority they never earned. The irreversible delegitimation of the Bolshevik Party as an organization of intellectuals whose access to knowledge allegedly qualified them for social leadership also extends to Western intellectuals, even as ideologists of a civil society obsessed with ascribed democratic ideals. When all is said and done, the latter's glorification of "civil society" in the name of democracy is not qualitatively different from the former's advocacy of the working class in the name of equality. Efforts to relegitimate intellectuals as self-limiting agents of collective consciousness articulating emancipatory politics displace the more important task of positing any substantial teleology and plunge into an analytical paralysis where, at best, the only result is the measuring of the new in terms of the criteria of the old.

Shopping for the Emperor's New Clothes

There is no better example of all this than in *Gorbachev: The Debate* — a book

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dealing neither with Gorbachev nor with any debates concerning any of his reform projects, nor even with its announced intention "to reconsider the validity of several major theories of Soviet type societies in light of recent experiences and prospects" (v). This collection of essays is more than two years old and, for the most part, already available elsewhere. In light of recent developments, they are also hopelessly out of date and contribute nothing to understanding the problems of Soviet reform efforts or in elaborating their geopolitical meaning. Rather, they are an attempt by "civil society ideologists" to spin out a few more theoretical epicycles to legitimate their systematic misreadings of recent events, i.e., up to 1987.[6] The book's only possible marginal value is as a born-again liberals' manifesto concerning Eastern Europe which, because of its slow gestation, comes out pre-refuted by spectacular political developments that have taken place since the various contributions were originally written.

Consider the very first essay, "The Gorbachev Phenomenon," by Heller and Fehér. In attempting to preempt potential "myth-makers" from speculating about the implications of Soviet reforms (20) — a subject presumably open for discussion only among certified experts — they propose a crude positivist methodology of isolating emerging "relevant facts," classifying them into clusters, and interpreting them according to a "scenario" in order to draw out their meaning. Since facts do not walk around with an apodictic description attached to their forehead, H. & F. end up constituting and isolating as "relevant" only those facts so legitimated by their idiosyncratic East European scenario. The objective is to support the dubious ideological assumptions they brought with them from Hungary a few years ago, which were probably instrumental in their decision to emigrate: Soviet-type systems cannot be reformed. To be sure, they hedge their bets by taking a "scientific" distance from their conclusions, which they do not allow to go further than raising a few new and allegedly "provocative" questions. But the narrative betrays a different plot. The only "cluster of socially significant facts" they can identify is a change of elite, which is only committed to modernize Soviet society by introducing functional equivalents to the Protestant ethic without altering existing power relations. All else is PR fluff. They approvingly quote one of the co-editors, who also happens to be their closest colleague, "American expert A. Arato," as the author of the new scientific term "language-reorientation" to describe one of the more interesting yet politically insignificant new developments. This is essentially "the only possible bargain the Gorbachev team can offer in exchange for Western loans" (22).

6. Poorly edited and full of typos — out of laziness and/or incompetence, the editors have not even bothered to correct British spellings (in the Brus essay) or typical East European authors' mistakes of occasionally misplacing definite articles (136) — this book is *immaculate* in the sense that the publisher must have shipped the manuscript to the printer sight unseen. Since, for reasons unknown, the reprint fees were paid by "a generous grant" from the Dean of the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research (iv), the publisher must have only thrown in the paper and ink, which explains how a greedy but otherwise respectable publisher could possibly underwrite such a dubious scholarly enterprise.

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In less pretentious and pseudo-scientific terms: all Gorby can come up with in exchange for Western big bucks is new rhetoric. Otherwise, everything remains the same.

Mockingly dismissing "almost all recent interpretations" as paralogisms resulting from "the long frustration . . . about a conspicuously conservative and immobile society," H. & F. propose to evaluate the prospects of Soviet reforms from the viewpoint of past East European experiences. But here they fall, to use an equally pretentious put down, into a variation of the fallacy of composition in reducing the options of the whole, or the imperial center, to those of its parts. Not only do the authors overlook that the Soviet giant can do what the East European midgets cannot, but that the question of reforms in the USSR is no longer a matter of possible choices: the Soviet socio-economic situation has deteriorated so much that reforms have become a matter of the system's very survival.[7] Consequently, what they rule out as paralogistic, fantastic, irrational, etc., is precisely what has come to pass: far-reaching political democratization, which may or may not have much to do with the *success* of economic reforms, has been on the Soviet agenda for quite some time. Although, as Leante and others have convincingly shown,[8] Soviet structural constraints rather than bureaucratic opposition or the reformers' timidity are the main obstacles to a rapid implementation of reforms, the latter are being implemented notwithstanding the long term risks as well as immediate political and economic costs. What looks embarassingly naive today is H. & F.'s dark forebodings about the possible responses of "the army generals or the proverbial 'masses' " (37). The former are now worrying about inadequate unemployment benefits and lack of sufficient civilian housing, and the latter seem to be too busy re-establishing their ethnic identities to bother with much else. The one condition that H. & F. unambiguously rule out as a "squaring of the circle" turns out to be precisely what is presently being undertaken in the midst of growing chaos and frustration: "the creation of institutional frameworks which perpetuate the modernizing momentum" (37).

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7. This is the conclusion drawn by more objective and better informed observers such as Aslund, who also went through the gamut of East European reform experiences to see whether any of them could be applicable to the USSR, only to reach similar pessimistic conclusions. Unlike Heller and Feher, however, Aslund has no East European ideological axes to grind. Thus he readily infers the obvious: since "the Soviet Union appears unable to reform any branch of its economy without both ideological revision and political reform" the inevitable is happening concerning "far-reaching democratization as the only way of breaking the harmful power of the bureaucracy over the economy." Similarly, "there is no reason to believe that the Russians would be unable to adapt to a liberal economy." See Anders Aslund, *Gorbachev's Struggle for Economic Reform: The Soviet Reform Process, 1985-88* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), pp. 180-181. Of course, Aslund's book was written later than Heller's and Feher's essay, but that is no excuse. *Gorbachev: The Debate* appeared only 24 days before Aslund's book.

8. Lucio Leante, "*Perestroika* at a Snail's Pace," *Telos* 80 (Summer 1989), pp. 79-92; and Antonio Carlo, "Contradictions of *Perestroika*," *Telos* 79 (Spring 1989), pp. 29-46.

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Before discussing H. & F.'s "universally beneficial" although "eminently fictitious" but utterly lame utopian scenario of "a domination-free discussion of the most adequate, and the most acceptable project of modernization" (30),[9] it is illuminating to examine two other contributions to this anthology which reach equally problematic conclusions: those of Cornelius Castoriadis and "American expert A. Arato."[10]

Saving Face

Even more bluntly than H. & F., the very title of Castoriadis' contribution immediately drives home his continuing pessimism concerning Gorbachev's chances to implement any meaningful reforms. Thus "The Gorbachev Interlude" ends up as an exercise in self-deception by a stubborn ex-activist desperately seeking to vindicate, against all contrary available evidence, his earlier mistaken analyses

9. Why "domination-free" rather than "open," "democratic," "free" or merely "unrestricted"? Domination-free is a code word for Habermas' communication theory which, in this context, unnecessarily complicates an otherwise clear statement. It functions, however, as a diplomatic "pledge of allegiance" to theoretical positions the authors seek to associate with their "civil society ideology." Self-serving maneuvers of this type occlude the fact that Habermas himself does not seem to harbor too many eschatological illusions about the redeeming value of "civil society" as such. Within Habermas' fundamental distinction between system and lifeworld, civil society can only fit in as a theoretical fifth wheel. Even in its "new and improved" version, whereby economy and politics are sharply differentiated, civil society remains already institutionally *constituted* and, therefore, necessarily part of that system Habermas wants to prevent from further penetrating the lifeworld. The problem here is not only a sloppy identification of "civil society" with the kind of *exceptional* socio-political situation obtaining in Poland circa 1980 — and thus essentially irrelevant anywhere else (even in Poland, after the Party's abdication) — but also with Habermas' own notion of the lifeworld. Habermas originally appropriated this concept from Alfred Schutz, who in turn learned it from the older Husserl. But already in Schutz the lifeworld had lost that pre-categorical immediacy which in Husserl made it such an explosive reference point whence to subvert the all-pervasiveness of identity logic. Frozen in subsystems and presuppositions carefully deduced from the structure of the system, the lifeworld in Habermas readily forfeits precisely that creative dimension meant to prevent the system from leading to self-destruction. At any rate, Habermas' appropriation of the lifeworld cannot be translated into "civil society" without depriving it of whatever residual corrective potential Habermas thinks it has. For a much more systematic and elaborate but ultimately futile effort to establish diplomatic relations between Habermas' communication theory and the civil society ideology of born-again liberals, see Jean Cohen and Andrew Arato, "Politics and the Reconstruction of the Concept of Civil Society," in Axel Honneth *et al.* eds., *Zwischenbetrachtungen: Im Prozeß der Aufklärung: Jürgen Habermas zum 60. Geburtstag*, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1989), pp. 491ff. In the effort to contain as much as possible what they perceive as a inevitably demonic state, the two authors end up overloading their version of a "democratic civil society" with so many "rights" that they forget to leave any social space for democracy.

10. This idiosyncratic designation may be H. & F.'s only real contribution in this essay: a clumsy attempt to sneak in an academic *nomenklatura* whereby ascribed authority bestows profundity on otherwise pedestrian euphemisms.

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of the USSR.[11] After all, this is the same author who a few years earlier wrote about "The Impossibility of Reforms,"[12] that the expansion of the military-industrial complex (which he pompously rebaptized "the military sub-society"[13]) was irreversible, that imperialism was the regime's only option, and that, "short of an internal explosion in Russia . . . the regime will continue on its present course."[14] Along with H. & F., Castoriadis also sees a change in leadership resulting, at best, in merely cosmetic changes, leaving Soviet power relation and imperialist policies fundamentally unchanged. This is because: "External expansion is not an 'idea' in the mind of Kremlin leaders: it is inscribed in the very structure of the regime, materialized in the state of productive forces, of the economy, of society, in their division between the efficacious military and the scanty non-military sectors."[15] Little does it matter that Gorbachev has launched the most ambitious reform program since the Bolshevik revolution, that the military budget has been drastically cut and is slated for even further reductions,[16] that the USSR has for all practical purposes left

11. Consistent with an old council tradition, which refused to call a country where all soviets have long been abolished "the Soviet Union" or "the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" (a name introduced in December 1922 to emphasize Russia's international socialist character), Castoriadis does not write about "the USSR" or "the Soviet Union" (80) but always about "Russia" — as if using the other designation would mislead anyone into believing that there really were soviets in the USSR, or that the country was really "socialist" in the classical sense. Similar irrelevant details constantly crop up in the text.

12. Cornelius Castoriadis, *Devant la Guerre* (Paris: Fayard, 1981), pp. 153-162. This title *must* be translated as *Facing the War* and not *Confronting the War*, *In Front of the War*, or anything else, lest one incur the severest strictures from this most nitpicking of authors. Efforts to humanize his barbaric style in translation have resulted in his appending "(poor)," "(very poor)," or "(very inadequate)" to every citation he makes of many of the English translations of his essays that he quotes in "The Gorbachev Interlude" (82-83). Allegedly more literal translations of his works, supervised by Castoriadis himself, have been charitably characterized as "atrocious" and have led to speculations that the source of the confusions was "due to the grammatical terrorism of the translators which suggests they got Castoriadis' French into English by first putting it into Serbo-Croatian." See Robert D'Amico's review of Castoriadis' *Crossroads in the Labyrinth*, in *Telos* 60 (Summer 1984), pp. 195 and 197. For a devastating refutation of *Devant la Guerre*, written well before the Afghanistan defeat and the Soviets' own revelations of their military weaknesses, see Gabor T. Rittersporn, "Facing the War Psychosis," *Telos* 51 (Spring 1982), pp. 22-31.

13. *Devant la Guerre*, *op. cit.*, p. 46. See also the (excellent) English translation of the first chapter of this book, "Facing the War," in *Telos* 46 (Winter 1980-1981), p. 61.

14. Cornelius Castoriadis, " 'Facing the War' and 'The Socio-Economic Roots of Re-Armament': A Rejoinder" in *Telos* 53 (Fall 1982), p. 196. Castoriadis has never changed his mind concerning this claim.

15. Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Crisis of Western Societies," in *Telos* 53 (Fall 1982), p. 17.

16. See Alexei I. Izyumov, "The Demilitarization of the Soviet Economy" in *Telos* 80 (Summer 1989), pp. 149-153. A member of The Institute for the USA and Canada, the author has been actively working on problems related to the conversion of military to civilian production. See also Evgenii Kuznetsov and Felix Shirokov, "Science-Intensive Enterprises and the Conversion of Defense Industries," in this issue of *Telos*.

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Afghanistan and washed its hands of Eastern Europe, and that most of the "internal explosions" which have taken place so far or are likely to take place in the near future (with the possible exception of the Baltic republics, which are a clear-cut case of occupied foreign countries) have been ethnic in character and ultimately relegitimating rather than fundamentally threatening the regime (e.g., the Nagorno-Karabakh feud between Armenians and Azerbaijanis). Unwilling to apologize for misleading his readers[17] with his earlier Left war-mongering in *Devant la Guerre* — a work which successfully out-Reaganed Reagan in revamping collective Cold War hysteria in the early 1980s — in "The Gorbachev Interlude" Castoriadis unashamedly reiterates positions he has consistently held since the 1940s, when he launched *Socialisme ou Barbarie*.[18] The title of a periodical, *Socialisme ou Barbarie* was also the name of one of the many politically irrelevant, post-Trotskyist sects whose members (according to their leader's own grudgingly euphemistic admission after he finally decided to abolish the group),[19] turned out to be passive consumers not all that different from other "activists" plotting imaginary revolutionary strategies in Parisian cafés. Over four decades later, very little of substance seems to have changed other than an upgrading of locales: from cafés to universities, which in the meantime, have themselves become cut-rate intellectual cafeterias. The USSR is still seen as in the process of becoming a *stratocracy* — a miserably awkward term Castoriadis deployed to describe a situation in which all of society ends up essentially as an appendage to the military apparatus.[20] Gorbachev's

17. He does reluctantly acknowledge that in 1981 he had thought the rise of a Gorbachev to be "virtually impossible."

18. For reasons not immediately obvious, but probably having to do with the mistaken assumption that 1968 somehow vindicated the group's theoretical outlook, most of the material relating to the difficult caeserian birth of *Socialisme ou Barbarie* out of the womb of an aging 4th International — at least that part relating to Castoriadis— was reprinted in several volumes in the 1970s. For Castoriadis' break with Trotskyism, see Cornelius Castoriadis, *La Societé Bureaucratique 1: Les Rapports de Production en Russie* (Paris: Union Generales D'Editions, 1983), now even available in English as *Political and Social Writings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), vol. 1, trans. by David Ames Curtis. See also Dick Howard's uncritical "Introduction to Castoriadis," in *Telos* 23 (Spring 1975), pp. 117-131. A much embellished but equally apologetic account appears as the last chapter of Howard's *The Marxian Legacy* (New York: Urizen Books, 1977), pp. 262-301. On Howard's insistence, *Telos* originally published Castoriadis' work in English, at a time when the journal was still deeply engaged in uncovering trends and ideas which had been effectively repressed during the Cold War. A careful examination of his work soon revealed its scholasticism, dogmatism and ultimate political irrelevance. Disagreements over its value, along with other related issues, eventually led to the resignation of several editors from the editorial board.

19. "An Interview with C. Castoriadis" in *Telos* 23 (Spring 1975), p. 142.

20. The prospects of praetorianism as the possible outcome of the failure of Soviet reforms is an old saw with what Braslauer, *op. cit.*, aptly labels "counsels of alarm." In this respect, civil society ideologists in general, and Castoriadis in particular, fall readily in step with the most violently anti-communist exponents of the American Sovietology establishment.

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"reforms"[21] are seen as doomed or, if in any way consequential, precipitating a social explosion which will eventually pit the people against the military. Then it will once again be a matter of socialism or barbarism. QED. Castoriadis' 40-years-old Manichean fantasy will finally become reality and, if "socialism" succeeds, everyone but the bureaucrats and the military will presumably live happily everafter.

Not surprisingly, for Castoriadis *perestroika* and *glasnost* will either go too far with substantial reforms, resulting in the purge of Gorbachev and his cronies, their gradual downgrading into meaninglessness, or there will be a revolution with unpredictable results (81). In any event, nothing has substantially changed in his account. He still sounds like a US Defense Department spokesman or a military contractor testifying before Congress about the need to maintain current defense spending: Russia overextended itself in Afghanistan, so it had to temporarily cut back to gain some breathing space; its nuclear arsenal, even if decimated, remains frightening; if nuclear arms were all eliminated, Russia would still be the military colossus in Eurasia; and even the elimination of intermediate nuclear weapons would increase rather than decrease the likelihood of American escalation or appeasement in case of a limited engagement in Europe because, confronted with having to go all out and risk massive losses or simply leaving Europe to its fate, the US would undoubtedly choose the latter. *Ergo*: do not mess with the military budget.

Unlike run-of-the-mill military contractors, however, Castoriadis reaches these conclusions by means of a philosophy of history which, except for a few idiosyncratic mystifications, is not altogether unlike that of other civil society ideologists.[22] Behind pretentious jargon such as the "magma of social

21. Castoriadis is so reluctant to grant the very possibility of reforms in the Soviet Union that (except in a couple of places where, probably out of sloppiness, he seems to forget) he always incarcerates the word in quotation marks. By reforms, however, he means the radical variety effecting the very structure of the system. So he now grudgingly acknowledges the possibility of minor reforms, whose function is merely to rationalize and streamline the existing system of domination (74).

22. Although Castoriadis is very critical of what he calls "the cretinism" of born-again liberals, whom he sees as having "no new ideas, and making no effort to confront present problems," (see "Castoriadis, un Daçu du auche-Droite," an interview with Michel Contat, in *Le Monde*, July 12, 1986, p. 15) his position is not all that different from theirs. Although his notion of "autonomy" is more elaborate than that of ordinary born-again liberals who hardly ever go beyond formal or abstract freedom, his several pages of psychoanalytic meanderings do not contribute anything towards a solution of what analytic philosophers used to call "the problem of other minds" (the constitution of intersubjectivity). See Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Imaginary Institutions of Society*, trans. by Kathleen Blamey (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), pp. 101-108. Unable to make much headway, Castoriadis ends up posing autonomy as an absolute presupposition — which is tantamount to dismissing rather than solving the problem. See Cornelius Castoriadis, "Power, Politics, Autonomy," in Honneth *et al.* eds, *Zwischenbetrachtung . . ., op. cit.* pp. 453-481. In this context, Habermas' attempt to bypass the problem by making intersubjectivity a function of language is definitely preferable.

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imaginary significations," which means nothing more than shared worldviews motivating social action or holding societies together (i.e., ideology plus whatever other unthematized complementary assumptions are necessary for living rather than just rational coherence),[23] hides a rather pedestrian Enlightenment vision: modernization (or progress, as it used to be called in the good old days) is a function of new ideas that grasp the masses (in Castoriadis' and other civil society ideologists' new and improved vocabulary — or "language reorientation" — "new social movements") which, under conditions of relative freedom, precipitate significant social changes. When ruling elites are sufficiently threatened and powerful enough to prevent these demands from objectifying themselves into new social institutions, things deteriorate to the point where eventually a revolution takes place. To the extent that ruling elites are inextricably bound to the existing system, they can only perpetuate it with rationalizing quantitative modifications which, however, leave the fundamental structure unchanged. If the problems are structural, rationalization will never provide anything but stop-gap solutions so that eventually, when all such stop-gap measures have been exhausted, the question of qualitative change will once again resurface in the form of a major "social explosion." Except for the terminological streamlining or "language reorientation" (mostly by means of psychoanalytic mystifications), this is not all that different from the council-communist Marxism 101 of *Socialisme ou Barbarisme*, cleansed of some of its economistic encrustations.

Within such a context it is clear why Castoriadis rules out the possibility of reforms in the USSR: they would have to come either from "above," in which case they would simply feed into the logic of the given, or from "below" where, unfortunately, there are no social movements interested in or able to advocate them (Castoriadis also uses the scientifically rigorous bipolar division of society into "above" and "below"). So far, this is standard civil society ideology.[24]

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23. Castoriadis has made a late career out of repackaging old ideas in new terminological wrappings and remarketing them as his own. Thus, his "social historical" turns out to be nothing more than the combination of Hegel's subjective and objective Spirit, the "instituting" and the "instituted" recycle Spinoza's *natura naturans* and *natura naturata* (or the Abbé Sieyès' *pouvoir constituant* and *pouvoir constitués*), etc. The price he pays for this pseudo-originality, however, is that he not only fails to contribute anything new but also systematically misreads current history.

24. Not all East European Sovietologists enamored with the rediscovery of the category of civil society as a kind of snake-oil to cure all possible political ills are as stiff and pessimistic as Castoriadis. Thus, for example, Stojanović sees Gorbachev's reforms encouraging the formation of "an effective mass movement for democratic socialism" which could become the precondition for an eventual revolution — something presumably unavoidable since "the institutionalization of political pluralism . . . is impossible without revolution." See Svetozar Stojanović, *Perestroika: From Marxism and Bolshevism to Gorbachev* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988), pp. 142 and 167. Notwithstanding its commendable intentions, this is clearly an ideological pipedream contradicted by Stojanović's own account, according to which "ordinary citizens will also bitterly resist . . . reforms" since "*universal state paternalism* . . . is deeply ingrained in the

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When all is said and done, Castoriadis' originality boils down to his paranoid obsession with the military as the decisive social agency (71). No more need be said in this context other than there is no evidence whatsoever to warrant this either in past Russian history or in recent events. Contrary to Castoriadis' fears, troops have been withdrawn from Eastern Europe, Gorbachev has made it clear to East European officials that they are on their own (worse yet: he has explicitly instructed East European communist leaders to cut out the hard-nosed Marxist-Leninist nonsense and play ball with the opposition), and the only thing that seems to keep so many tanks and troops in Eastern Europe is probably that they cannot be withdrawn too much faster since, in addition to the usual logistical problems such as, e.g., the poor roads connecting Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, once withdrawn it is unclear how so much manpower can be recycled in a rapidly disintegrating economy. Equally wrong, and already refuted by recent developments, is his ruling out of the possibility to critically re-examine Russian history (77-78), to liberalize emigration, etc.

What is most embarrassing here is not so much the series of mistaken conclusions Castoriadis deduces from his rusty, linguistically reoriented ideological machinery but his inability to envision the very possibility that future history may be made in a way different than the past. What makes the model of bourgeois revolutions and reforms — in its Marxist or upgraded civil society version — universally valid? Is this model metaphysically necessary, as Castoriadis assumes (70), or merely an educated guess of how things happened, hypostatized and unwarrantedly universalized out of its concrete socio-historical context?[25] In ahistorically and mechanically superimposing the past onto the present and the future, Castoriadis ends up deducing the impossibility of events that have already come to pass even before his treatises have come off the press. His dubious logocentric assumption of the necessity of the so-called "magma of social imaginary significations" advocated by autonomous movements for social change dissolves in the realization that the qualitatively new cannot be either mechanically inferred from the present or exhaustively prefigured by any movement whose temporary totalizations always

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popular consciousness . . " (p. 164). If anything, as David Ost, among others, has pointed out in connection with the dynamics of Polish events, the working class and ordinary citizens are likely to ally themselves with the entrenched bureaucrats *against* reforms which will result in a decline in their already pitifully low standards of living. See David Ost, "The Transformation of Solidarity and the Future of Central Europe," in *Telos* 79 (Spring 1989), pp. 63-94. Hauslohner's contribution to the Fehér/Arato volume concludes with considerations of this type (108-111), although he does not draw the broader political implications they entail. Unless the wholly unwarranted ideological assumption that the success of reforms is a function of autonomous mass movements "from below" taking up this cause, the only possible results are either a pessimistic assessment or self-contradictory wishful thinking.

25. These ahistorical universalizations are also typical of Castoriadis' other more philosophical and theoretical works. See D'Amico, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-98.

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end up re-serialized in new frozen institutions. And here is the problem: Castoriadis operates with a confused concept of reforms and a naive theory of social movements.

Unlike H. & F. — and the whole Marxist tradition, which always differentiated between quantitative and qualitative change, reform and revolution (or, now that the very term "revolution" has become terminally unfashionable, garden-variety reforms and *radical* reforms) — Castoriadis blurs this crucial distinction and even balks at conceding the possibility of the former in the USSR, since the one is seen as eventually necessitating the other. What bothers him most is that the Soviet Union could institute limited reforms to improve conditions only sufficiently to allow a Brezhnev-type regime to continue indefinitely, thus ruling out his apocalyptic "socialism or barbarism" scenario. At any rate, he still holds to the mythology of 18th/19th century "social explosions" predicated on a hopelessly irrelevant contraposition of a terminally oppressive state dominating a rational and virtuous civil society which, if it ever did exist, no longer does. The only likely explosions have already taken place, are taking place now, and will continue taking place in the foreseeable future, without any cataclysmic impact in the foreseeable future — in a chaotic context where the regime will try to work its way into the Western socio-economic framework.

The same can be said of Castoriadis' naive notion of social movements still embroiled in the glorious, one-dimensional imagery of the storming of the Bastille or the Winter Palace. Social movements have never been constituted by the likes of Voltaire and Descartes making decisions only after exhaustive "domination-free discussion." In the age of the culture industry and postmodernism, whatever scatter-brained "magma of social imaginary significations" a social movement comes up with — from the Taoist yin-yang of Fritjof Capra's ecologism to the Catholic metaphysics of the pro-life movement — it ends up post-rational and ultimately generating at best the kind of negativity which, within conditions of minimal systems rationality, can be readily turned into badly-needed internal control mechanisms. Ironically enough, Gorbachev is behaving almost as if he were aware of this dialectic. He has been encouraging the formation of autonomous movements everywhere, even at the cost of irreversibly delegitimating every East European Communist party out of power. This is why, notwithstanding the seeming insurmountability of its obstacles, Gorbachev's "interlude" is far from coming to a close. In all likelihood will last a long time, ultimately neither turning into a military barbarism nor a panglossian socialism, but to a clumsy capitalism. The USSR will most likely become a kind of junior partner or, if it disintegrates into a plurality of states, a few partners, within a broadened European Economic Community.

Even if one were to buy into the mystificatory logic of the "magma of social imaginary significations," Castoriadis' analysis would still fail on its own terms. Within the very limited historical context out of which this model is abstracted, essentially the era of bourgeois revolutions as thematized by Marxism, what Castoriadis' "language-reorientation" projects as a chaotic prefiguration of

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subsequent social institutions turns out to be so self-contradictory and inconclusive that practically anything can be predicated on it. Only *after* the facts is it possible to deduce a causally-effective "magma," whose explanatory value is of no use other than in legitimating otherwise ideological pipedreams.[26]

Castoriadis rhetorically asks: "what would happen if people all over the country started demanding real freedom of speech?" (77), and H. & F. gingerly reply that if "all actors of Soviet society . . . would convene for a domination-free discussion of the most adequate, and the most generally acceptable project of modernization" then this "extremely peaceful event would be the day of the most radical Russian revolution" (30). Recent Soviet developments have already refuted these ideological speculations: Gorbachev's cautious lifting of the lid of the social Pandora's box has revealed a Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes* of ethnic, corporatist, nationalist, etc. interests whose seeming irreconcilability begs for a strong, even if greatly diminished, central government to reestablish "law and order" — at least to guarantee those minimal conditions necessary for transacting normal everyday business. It is all too easy to speculate that what may be interpreted as an initial failure is the result of Gorbachev either having gone too far or not far enough. The point is that a de-sovietization of the USSR understood as attempts to encourage the development of a socialist version of the *Rechtsstaat* and of capitalist relations which would function as internal rationalizing control mechanisms within the context of the present system (i.e., a command system committed to retain at least the semblance of its present social identity) cannot be simply a matter of opening up social space within which a broad popular reform movement would miraculously come into being to support Gorbachev against an entrenched and recalcitrant bureaucratic apparatus — as civil society ideologists fantasize. This process of de-sovietization as a precondition for Western-type modernization presupposes many painful preliminary steps before it will be possible to relegitimate the central government — steps involving considerable disintegration and dismantling of the existing institutional apparatus.

Self-Limiting Critical Thought

Given the present predicament, where the central government today not only has very little rational legitimation but can no longer uphold its side of the historic compromise between the regime and the populace,[27] any future legitimacy

26. Castoriadis' authoritarian style and pseudo-rigor do not succeed in concealing conceptual sloppiness. He writes of "quasi-certainty" (81), "quasi-totality" (75), and of the "nearly-impossible (not strictly impossible this is not mathematics or physics)" (63), as if the indefinite modifier "quasi" were an insurance policy against inconclusiveness. Similarly, contrary to his own nitpicking distinctions in *Devant la Guerre (op. cit.*, p. 162) and unforgiving fulminations against his critics for confusing "effective" and "efficient" (in his " 'Facing the War' and 'The Socio-Economic Roots of Re-Armament': A Rejoinder," *op. cit.*, p. 195) in *Gorbachev: The Debate* he himself readily confuses the two (66).

27. Victor Zaslavsky, *The Neo-Stalinist State: Class, Ethnicity and Consensus in Soviet Society* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe Inc., 1982), pp. 130ff.

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cannot be reconstituted on an imperial or even a federal model — or on the basis of class or ideology. Ethnicity, religion or nationalism seem to be the only contexts within which any such reconstitution can take place — and then only in terms of, at best, a greatly weakened central apparatus. But this means fragmentation, economic disruption, and the functional equivalent of Thirdworldification. This is the toll exacted by the passage through the purgatory of ethnic, religious, and nationalist particularism. As Arato put it several years ago in an insightful critique of Habermas, modernization and reforms in the USSR can be predicated only "on the prior development of particular national cultural constellations and on the institutional mechanisms of the preservation or elimination of those traditions which favor or inhibit the emergence of civil society."[28] Leaving aside for the moment the question of "civil society," for capitalism and bourgeois institutions to develop along Western lines it will be necessary first to reconstitute ethnic/national identities and corresponding institutional structures independently of the central apparatus. Contrary to Habermas' rationalistic hope that today "institutions cannot be consolidated on the basis of regressive forms of legitimation," Arato reluctantly rejected this linear logic which ruled out *a priori* any development other than unimpeded Western-style modernization. On the basis of studies indicating that "renewed traditionalism remains an important part of the social psychology of the Soviet 'citizen',"[29] he concluded that ethnicity, nationalism and religion would play a major (although at that time unclear) role after the eventual closing of the Brezhnev era.

Arato's reluctance to follow through with this almost prophetic analysis — something that has since been fruitfully developed by others[30] — was already at that time a function of his concern with Eastern Europe in general and Poland in particular,[31] and his universalization of this predicament to all

28. Andrew Arato, "Critical Sociology and Authoritarian State Socialism," in John B. Thompson and David Held, eds., *Habermas: Critical Debates* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1982), p. 218.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 216.

30. See, among others, Kenneth Jowitt, "Soviet Neo-Traditionalism: The Political Corruption of a Leninist Regime," in *Soviet Studies*, vol. 35, no. 3, (1983), pp. 275-297. Jowitt's overemphasis on the monolithic character of the Party, however, led him to project his insightful analogy of the future Soviet trajectory with that of the Ottoman Empire and thus exclude the possibility that, in the process of decay associated with the deployment of *perestroika*, the Party itself could change and adapt to the new conditions so created. There is no reason why the Soviet Party cannot learn from the example of its Hungarian and Polish counterparts — especially if these experiments manage to bear some fruit — so that the duration of the banishment to the neo-traditional purgatory will be relatively brief and conducive to eventual modernization. For a critique of Jowitt along these lines, see Breslauer, *op. cit.*

31. Not only did Arato — shortly before the imposition of martial law in 1981 — edit an informative and theoretically provocative special section of *Telos* on "Poland and the Future of Socialism," he also wrote on "Civil Society vs. the State: Poland 1980-81" (in *Telos* 47 [Spring 1981], pp. 23-47), where he assumed that "since civil society has been

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industrial and post-industrial societies. The result is an obsession with the re-emergence of a mythological civil society prefigured along rationalistic lines of democratic proceduralism and open discussion — something irreconcilable with the pre-rational or irrational character of ethnicity and nationalism. Consequently, efforts to bring about a negative subordination of the economy, i.e., the retention of the regime's political domination over a now depoliticized but still dependent economy and culture, were seen as heading towards the constitution "from above" of an artificial civil society — "a virulent militaristic, ethnocentric, anti-Semitic, Great Russian nationalism."[32] Caught in the one-dimensional linear logic of Weberian categories, Arato was unable to see beyond a mere extension of new and improved (but essentially still the same) relations of domination. Any artificially generated negativity, however, whether in the form of a manipulated "civil society" or an unmanageable set of capitalist relations, always generates unintended consequences which not only subvert the original project but open up unforeseeable possibilities by, among other things, releasing hitherto untapped and unsuspected sources of creative energies. And this is precisely what has happened with Gorbachev's initial, cautious reforms: their unintended consequences have created a chaotic new social context which rules out any going back to a *status quo ante* through some ominous bureaucratic counterrevolution, or continuing along the trajectory vaguely prefigured during the first years of the new regime.

In the years between the publication of his criticism of Habermas and the writing of his introduction to *Gorbachev: The Debate*, Arato has forgotten his earlier insights. By overemphasizing and universalizing the self-limiting project of the Polish opposition, all he can come up with is a self-limiting understanding of existing geopolitical realities. Thus his meager speculations about the possible configuration of a civil society (which certainly do not amount to any "theory" worthy of the name[33] are self-limiting abstractions of the Polish

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reconstructed from below, even economic reforms are now possible in Poland" and that the establishment of a socialist civil society — whatever such an oxymoron may have meant — was imminent. On the other hand, he excluded outright what is increasingly appearing as the most viable option: the possibility of the restoration of capitalism. Recent events in Poland have shown how easily "civil society" evaporates into capitalism, and social movements into standard political parties, once Gorbachev ("from above") and the increasingly unmanageable economic crisis ("from below") open some free political space. See Jadwiga Staniszkis, "The Obsolescence of Solidarity," and Jacek Tarkowsky, "Old and New Patterns of Corruption in Poland and the USSR," in *Telos* 80 (Summer 1989), pp. 37-50 and pp. 51-62 respectively.

32. Arato, "Critical Sociology . . ." *op. cit.*, p. 214.

33. Arato attempts to articulate such a "theory" in "Civil Society, History and Socialism: Reply to John Keane," *Praxis International*, vol. 9, no. 1/2 (April & July 1989), pp.133-151. In a proprietary squabble with a petty Australian academic operator charged with appropriating the notion of "civil society" — a category Arato apparently thinks he and his wife own outright as a kind of family business — he meanders through a long self-serving (and occasionally inaccurate) history of the concept to reach very pretentious conclusions, i.e., that the separation of the economic and the political

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and, to a much lesser extent, the Hungarian experience of the 1970s and early 1980s, which have very little bearing on the Soviet situation or, after Gorbachev's

sides of "civil society" and the self-limitations of political democracy to avoid jamming "steering outputs" render civil society "the key concept in a new critical theory of all contemporary industrial societies." For historical legitimation, he appeals first of all to Gramsci, while at the same time slandering him as a run-of-the-mill communist: thus, according to Arato, Gramsci "certainly suspected but almost completely suppressed" the critical implications of "civil society" for Soviet society. Had Arato bothered to actually read Gramsci instead of relying on scores of epigones who have tried to use him to recontruct new versions of Marxism, he would not have made this unwarranted charge of intellectual and political dishonesty, nor systematically misunderstood Gramsci's philosophy. Arato may have found that: a) Gramsci mistakenly assumed that the Soviet Union was in the process of creating a qualitatively new type of society to which 19th century concepts such as "civil society" were inapplicable (and, after he realized in the early 1930s that Soviet society was not quite what he had hoped, rather than either apologizing for or "suppressing" anything he simply stopped writing about it); and b), which is fatal for any opportunistic appropriation of Gramsci as the ideologue of civil society, that the state is the logical and natural outcome of civil society, thus ruling out any sharp contraposition of the two other than in an exceptional and socially pathological context. At any rate, as an absolute historicist, Gramsci could never universalize and decontextualize a concept with precise historical roots to the level of a flat metaphysical abstraction buttressing a crude version of New Class ideology. Had Arato reflected on the significance of "Americanism and Fordism" — probably Gramsci's last politically crucial reflections before he went on to write about literary criticism, grammatology and other more esoteric theoretical subjects — he would have realized that this notebook is precisely about the potential *obsolescence* of civil society. For reasons too numerous to discuss here, Gramsci concluded that Americanism (understood as what came to be known as the New Deal or the welfare state penetration of every aspect of society, down to sexuality and psychoanalysis "as the expression of increased moral coercion of state and social apparatuses on single individuals") was a "passive revolution" and did not constitute the kind of qualitative break with entrepreneurial capitalism which would have necessitated the junking of not only traditional Marxism as a revolutionary theory but of the entire bourgeois problematic of an autonomous "civil society." But on the basis of his own argument, rather than by generalizing from the extremely limited amount of information at his disposal — which resulted in his analysis of Henry Ford, the old entrepreneurial capitalist *par excellence*, as his paradigm of the *new* capitalist, rather than focusing on the new corporate breed — it is clear that, if a New Deal or a welfare state were possible, if state regulation (or steering) of the capitalist economy were successful, then the Marxist problematic and its academic "civil society" version would be obsolete. See Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del Carcere*, edited by Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi Editore, 1975), pp. 2137-81; and Paul Piccone, *Italian Marxism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 197-200. In his aside, Arato simply provides the Right flip side of conformist Left readings of Gramsci as the acme of Marxist theory rather than its closing chapter. When the problematic of the culture industry — the lethal blind side of the Gramscian analysis — is seen in relation to "Americanism and Fordism," the only conclusion possible is that the age of Marxism and of "civil society" is inexorably over. For a series of flat and apologetic Marxist misreadings of this crucial text (efforts meant to legitimate the wooden ideology of the conservative wing of the Italian Communist Party but which, surprisingly enough, are fully consistent with Arato's reading of Gramsci), see Giorgio Baratta and Andrea Catone, ed., *Modern Times: Gramsci e la Critica dell'Americanismo* (Milan: Diffusioni '84, 1989).

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irreversible commitment to a radical reform project, even on Hungary or Poland. Today, the conditions which may have once necessitated an extraordinary self-limitation in the Polish or the Hungarian opposition no longer exist — after Solidarity has joined the government and the Hungarian Communist Party has dissolved itself. While in the Brezhnev years the Red Army functioned both as a real and an imagined bogey-man — especially in Poland — to legitimate the East European communist leadership's "self-limiting" repression,[34] now it is the other way around: it is Gorbachev who calls the Polish Communists and tells them to relent, or goes to East Berlin to practically remove a crusty, recalcitrant Honecker in the face of growing internal opposition — itself fueled by Gorbachev's policies. And even the Romanians, who for decades despised everything Russian, now look Eastward as a desirable alternative to Stalinism.[35] Serious limitations are no longer self-imposed out of fear of real or imaginary Soviet displeasure, but are a function of a governing apparatus in shambles and a society unable to readily undo decades of sovietization.[36]

If the universalization of the extremely restricted Polish experience of a few years ago to the level of a "critical theory of all contemporary industrial societies, redeeming important elements of the heritage of both radical democracy and socialism"[37] was ludicrous then, it is all the more so today, after conditions which gave rise to that experience have all but disappeared. Thus "civil society ideology" — a tortuous and mystificatory rediscovery of the wheel in the age of the super-computer — lingers on as a comic example of what happens when abstract theory gets lost in Eastern Europe and ends up confusing it with the whole world. After perestroiking around for a few years, it may eventually rediscover the American Constitution, whose Bill of Rights is a paradigmatic example of a successful limitation of state power. Worse yet, its only seemingly original contribution, the insistence on the separation of politics and economics is, to put it charitably, naive: it blurs the fact that every economy today — capitalist, socialist, or otherwise — is *irreversibly* politicized, and that politics is more than ever conditioned by powerful economic interests. At any rate, the mythology of a self-redeeming civil society composed of a multitude of social movements pressuring a state ontologized and removed from the society which originally generated it leads Arato to follow his fellow contributors in ruling out any possibility of reforms — at least, not before the maturing of what he poses as necessary preconditions. Yet, against the weight of his own arguments, he short-circuits his analysis to suddenly conclude with a set of necessary conditions for "genuinely *radical* reform," now deemed difficult but "not impossible" (16). Nothing in the rest of his introduction supports this minimal optimism.[38]

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34. Zygmunt Bauman, "Poland: On its Own" in *Telos* 79 (Spring 1989), pp. 47-62.
35. Steven L. Sampson, "Romania: House of Cards" in *Telos* 79 (Spring 1989).
36. See Victor Zaslavsky "The Price of Sovietization," in *Telos* 71 (Spring 1987), pp. 155-160.
37. Arato, "Civil Society, History and Socialism," *op. cit.*, p. 133.
38. This incongruity — clearly the result of sloppy, last minute efforts in damage

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Filling Space

The rest of the material in this volume is filler. Alec Nove's essay on "Soviet Agriculture" is a long (169-220) but interesting survey of problems in that notoriously disastrous area. Yet it does not go much beyond what the author already discussed in an earlier work,[39] is far too old to be even minimally informative concerning recent predicaments, and has absolutely nothing to say about debates concerning Gorbachev's reforms. Wlodzimierz Brus' "Gorbachev's 'Radical Economic Reform' in the Light of the East European Experience" is a little less ambitious undertaking than the title indicates. It merely extrapolates the results of the Hungarian New Economic Mechanism to use as a means of evaluating the prospects of Soviet efforts in roughly the same direction. Relying on Kornai's path-breaking work, Brus focuses on the need to establish capital markets in the absence of which "enterprises manage to escape the discipline of the market" (132). Since Gorbachev's leading economist, Abel Aganbegyan, has ruled this out (127), prospects are not too good for "an effective, truly radical, reform of the old Soviet economic system" (139). Even older than Nove's essay, Peter Hauslohner's "Gorbachev's Social Contract" was originally drafted in October 1985 (111) — at a time when much of what he says made pretty good sense. While not as ideological as most of the others, today it ends up tasting like stale bread in a context where a lot of cake is available (some of which he has himself baked[40]). Ilya Zemtsov's and John Farrar's "To Build a Better Mousetrap: The Economy" is practically a blow-by-blow account of some of the developments that took place in 1986. All it adds to what one could have learned by reading *The New York Times*, *Le Monde*, or any other relatively informative newspaper during that time is adherence to the Feher-Arato party-line that "Gorbachev has no desire to change the system through any fundamental reform and that he is merely seeking ways of making the existing system work more effectively" (166).

The only really interesting essay in this sorry collection, and the one which has managed to hold up against the acid-test of the last couple of years, is Seweryn Bialer's by now well-known and much-discussed "Gorbachev's Move." Here it is difficult to refrain from asking the old question: "what is a smart guy like this doing in an ideological dive like this?" Although already

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control — is easily explained by the fact that, as one of the editors, he could write the introduction at the very last moment, much later than the rest of the contributions to the volume, at a time when it had become quite obvious that his and his collaborators' analyses had already been refuted by concrete events.

39. Alec Nove, "Soviet Agriculture in the 1980s," Chapter 9 of *Socialism, Economics and Development* (London, Boston and Sidney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), pp. 150-168.

40. Peter Hauslohner, "Politics Before Gorbachev: De-Stalinization and the Roots of Reform." in Seweryn Bialer, ed., *Politics, Society and Nationality: Inside Gorbachev's Russia* (Boulder and London: Westview Press, 1989), pp. 41-90. Contrary to civil society ideology, Hauslohner concludes what in the Fehér/Arato volume remains an incomplete argument by emphasizing the dire necessity of reforms and the crucial role of leadership (rather than mythological mass movements) in deciding the future of Soviet society.

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superseded by his more recent work on the subject,[41] Bialer's analysis is highly instructive. Unlike the rest of the contributions, his evaluation is definitely positive. While aware of the difficulties involved and of new conflicts that Soviet reforms have since generated, he sees Gorbachev as definitely committed to modernization and reforms, though not necessarily along Western lines (42). He provides a surprisingly accurate evaluation of the present semi-Third World status of the Soviet economy (57-58), and points to the industrial working class as potentially the most serious obstacle to Gorbachev's plans. Notwithstanding all this, the prognosis is decidedly upbeat. But Bialer's voice is lost in the much louder moaning and groaning of the rest of the contributors, who at best can only envision Gorbachev's options as limited to choosing "between ever more radical reform (threatening the Party and current political elite) or presiding over the steady slide of the USSR into second- or third-rate status" (166). Unfortunately, as recent events seem increasingly to suggest, it is not a matter of *either/or* but of *both* — successfully institutionalized radical reforms *and* unavoidable steady decline.

Moishe Gonzales

41. See Bialer's contribution to the collection he has edited, *Inside Gorbachev's Russia . . ., op. cit.* In following Soviet events too closely, however, Bialer here tends to lose sight of broader geopolitical considerations and: 1) underestimates the extent to which Gorbachev has, for all practical purposes, given up lingering dreams of empire; and 2) falls back in line with most Sovietologists' pessimistic conventional wisdom to the effect that *perestroika* is still reversible.

Quest for Uncertainty

James T. Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought (1870-1920)* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 546 pp.

Sixty years ago, John Dewey argued that a "spectator theory of knowledge" has dominated Western thought from the birth of primordial religions through the modern era. According to Dewey, this theory's gnostic claims about foundational realities and the transcendence of ordinary experience have provided

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spiritual compensation for our always experientially precarious and contingent everyday existence.[1] Dewey believed that the intelligentsia have fashioned their certain truths to glorify their own intellectual "labor" and to devalue the practical arts of the underclasses. For Dewey, the history of Western religion has been composed of successive waves of priests, metaphysicians and epistemologists wasting millenia genuflecting before *a priori* spiritual and material foundations, and fretting about the consequent aporetic dualisms between body and soul, mind and matter, ideal and real, subject and object, fact and value, reason and feeling, perception and will, theory and practice — *ad infinitum*. Presumably, spectator theory has supplied conventional morality with a transcendental luster that has justified political rule and diverted the search for intelligence away from serving people's needs.

But in Dewey's time the practical arts underwent a meteoric rise in status, and, to his delight, a more modest and fruitful approach to knowledge seemed at hand. "Participator" theory abandoned the search for spiritual absolutes, shed assumptions about ultimate particles or ultimate sense data, and rejected claims about "immanent" truths in the "logic" of history. Apodictic truth was replaced by spatially and temporally-based knowledge subject to continual inquiry, publicity, and discussion, and responsive to new historical conditions and needs. A fully secular method of understanding appeared to be replacing the cognoscenti and their elitist spectator theory. Once the fanciful flights to "higher" realms ceased, reason would find a home in efforts to cope with contingent existence. Dewey hoped for a public philosophy that would extend democratic "inquiry" from science to the socio-political problems of "organized capitalism."[2] But in the years that followed his 1929 broadside, scientific work was cloistered once again behind the walls of specialized institutional spaces and technical vocabularies, while the rise of funded research increasingly married science to the most powerful capitalist bureaucracies. Insulated from the public, parochial disciplines and subdisciplines re-created, in only a few decades, several thousand years of spectator theories. Later, postmodern literati, reacting to the consequent fragmentation of knowledge, announced the arrival of an era no longer under the spell of Big Reason and Big Science. Still, in these artsy, deconstructionist circles, as well as in the somber gardens of scientific specialists, the Deweyian project of public philosophy was in nearly total eclipse.

Dewey is a central figure in Kloppenberg's *Uncertain Victory*. This panoramic treatise focuses on two generations of American and European theorists who

1. This section is based on Dewey's *The Quest For Certainty*. See John Dewey, *The Later Works*, vol. 4 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988).

2. Dewey's affirmative stance toward science has often been misinterpreted as scientism. On the contrary, he stressed mostly science's concern for systematic inquiry and its implicit normative emphasis on uncoerced discussion. He did not argue that the methods of the physical sciences should be applied in the social world (See Dewey, *op.cit.*, pp. 178-250). Further, Dewey considered narrow professional thought to be "celibacy of the intellect." See Dewey, *The Later Works*, vol. 2, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-13.

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attempted to reconstruct philosophy and the social sciences in order to address the progressive era's shift from entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism, and to force a *via media* between *laissez faire* individualism and socialist collectivism. As Kloppenberg demonstrates, rapidly changing social conditions during this period bankrupted claims about certain knowledge and inevitable social progress. According to these philosophers of the *via media*, the very possibility of intelligent intervention in history depends on recognizing both the limits of knowledge and the extensive impact of unintended consequences. They believed that reason, freed from the weighty pretensions of spectator theory, could be an effective tool to secure democratic social values. To achieve this goal, they developed a nondualistic "radical theory of knowledge" that embraced uncertainty; an historicist "ethics of rational benevolence" that criticized existing society on the basis of its own historical standards; and a concept of social democratic, progressive liberalism that substituted reformism and practical politics for revolution and rational society.

The first generation of these thinkers completed most of their work during the latter third of the 19th century, developing the philosophical basis for the bolder political theories of the second generation. Although the first generation ultimately contributed to a radical secularization of thought, they had strong religious roots. Wilhelm Dilthey, T.H. Green, Henry Sidgwick, and William James came from clerical families, while Dewey's mother was a devout Congregationalist. All were obsessed with the social consequences of the growing rift between science and religion. Even in the French anticlerical climate, Fouillée rejected claims about a positivist stand-in for religion. In Protestant countries, the intuitionist rebellion against fundamentalism established non-dogmatic grounds for religious belief, and made doctrine an historical matter subject to hermeneutic interpretation and reinterpretation. Thus, this intellectual openness, ethical vision, and concern for public life all drew inspirition from the liberal and activist strain of modern Protestantism.[3]

These thinkers claimed that efforts to transcend the Kantian dualism continued to pit reason against experience. They attacked the Hegelians for teleological system building and for substituting a logical synthesis for history; the British empiricists, for their passive, ahistorical, and non-social portrayal of mind and their *a priori* claims about sense data and biologistic association. James countered these approaches with a "radical empiricism" that erased the distinction between "mind stuff" and bodily feelings. His attempt to preserve the integrity of the intellect, intuition, emotion, will, and the corporeal in a unified

3. "Let each devout soul, each group of fellow believers, Unitarianism announced, seek the truth where it may be found; let each give to it such outward form as best reveals its divine nature; not seeking to impose a particular interpretation upon others, but each taking upon himself full responsibility for his spiritual welfare. Authority it regarded as the prop of the weak; dogma, as the body of a faith that is dead." See Vernon Louis Parrington, *The Romantic Revolution in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927) p. 327.

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conception of experience had enormous influence on the development of a radical theory of knowledge. He and his cohorts converged around a nondeterministic theory of action that balanced will and constraint, a pragmatic idea of truth, and a social conception of knowledge as the product of a "community of inquiry." At the same time, they "exchanged epistemology for history," made psychology a "political science" (95, 97), and maintained that cultural knowledge requires an interpretative approach to the shifting meanings of *Erlebnis* and its changing historical contexts.

In normative matters they could accept neither ethical formalism nor the equation of technical and social progress. Rejecting orthodox Marxism, they advocated historically informed criticism, which distinguishes them from critical theorists and postmodernists who all argue subsequently that bourgeois values are exhausted. Aware of the limitations of these ideals, they implied that the egalitarian components of bourgeois culture contained a utopian vision with deep cultural roots. Moreover, they argued that there was no alternative to existing values, however flawed, if social criticism is to have any chance of gaining broad public appeal and stimulating social reconstruction. Despite the fact that they made no promises about sweeping ethical progress, these thinkers believed their historical immanent critique would energize public discussion and reorient dominant values to satisfy changing community needs.

Their historicism opened them to political and theoretical disagreements. One of the most important rifts concerned the balance of "prudence" and "justice." Neither generation could agree about the prospects for harmonizing individual desires and social demands. The more optimistic theorists of the early generation (Green, Fouillée, and Dewey) contended that needs are socially constituted and, consequently, could be adjusted to broader social interests. Most important, they maintained that modernity produces an articulated and rich individuality with highly developed capacities for social cooperation and empathy. Not denying the prevailing social fragmentation and individualism, they claimed that, by focusing their immanent critique on those values which affirm the untapped potentialities for increased tolerance and social responsibility, the gap between individual and social interests could be significantly narrowed. The more progressive side of the *via media* expressed a "teleological" theory of social "self-realization," ultimately rooted in Hegelian thought (122). This provided a theoretical basis for their belief that a more just and equal society could be created. Conversely, James, Sidgwick, and Dilthey expressed a "tragic" view of modernity, stressing inevitable value conflict and the fundamental incompatibility between individual and social roles. In *Methods of Ethics*, Sidgwick argued that inequality could never be eliminated, and that conflicts over scarce goods forever precluded the possibility of a smooth integration of individual and society. Modernity increases the terrain of potential conflict and generates diversions which dissipate voluntaristic cooperation. However, even the pessimists within this group continued to embrace the ethical project of social justice.

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Regardless of their differences, both sides abandoned the search for ethical universals and settled for conflicting values and social diversity. Neither side could accept a complete fusion of individual and society. Their broadside against fundamentalist moralism defended autonomy and pluralism against just such a totalitarian consensus. Compassionate and appreciative understanding of individual and group differences was enough. A simple generosity of spirit encouraging compromise, conciliation, and reasonableness would come much closer to achieving in practice the harmonious social integration of individual and society that consensus theorists misguidedly envisioned in theory. However, hopes for cultural change hinged on a program of moral education that would carry this ethical critique to the masses.

While the older theorists had relatively little specific to say about politics, the second generation actively participated in political life. Because their mature works appeared after 1890, they addressed a more highly developed corporate capitalism and more differentiated socialist movement than the first generation. Beatrice and Sidney Webb, Richard Ely, Walter Rauschenbusch, Jean Jaurés, and Eduard Bernstein introduced liberal ideas into socialist politics. In opposition to Marxist arguments regarding revolutionary struggle, they advocated a *moral transformation* aimed at a peaceful reduction of capitalist inequalities. Since religious dissent had deep historical roots and was a powerful cultural force in later 19th century America, Ely's and Rauschenbusch's social gospel provided a very effective medium for communicating reformist ideas. Their approach to values and concern for community were consistent with the first generation's ethical theory. At the same time, these features countered contentions by *laissez faire* liberals that social democracy was a foreign import. Although the works of Ely and Rauschenbusch contrasted sharply with the secular radicalism of continental social democrats, they all shared assumptions about the limits of knowledge, which served as a basis for the rejection of Marxism and encouraged a liberally informed socialism.

Social democratic moral rhetoric had an affinity with the self-realization theories of the optimistic wing of the older theorists. Social democrats, however, linked their hopes for moral change directly to the new forms of cooperation, regulation, and planning that had emerged in the managerial firm and interventionist state, and which established organizational bases for ethical socialism within corporate capitalism.[4] Claiming that complex economic and social interdependence favored values that fostered a reduction of the gap between individual and social interests, they advocated a reformist politics stressing cross-class

4. Kloppenberg fails to recognize that these social democratic arguments originate with Marx. In his mature work, Marx also argued that large industry contains the seeds of socialism. He believed that the separation of management and ownership, centralized planning and social cooperation in the firm, the interventionist state and the world market (all of which accompanied the rise of large joint-stock companies) constituted "the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself . . ." See Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), p. 438.

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alliances, increased democracy, a social wage, state regulation, and nationalization of public monopolies. They were split over the issue of experts and technocracy. The Webbs, Ely, and Bernstein argued that administrators, technicians and scientists must have a leading role in creating and eventually managing their hoped-for social democracy. Educated elites were needed to spur democratic reform and to direct the re-education of the ignorant and easily manipulated populace. But even a social democratic cultural uplift would not eliminate the need for such "impartial" officials and "neutral" technical experts to execute centralized planning, to manage the complex organizational structures, and to guard against free-riding.

On the other side were those who fundamentally opposed technocracy. Rauschenbusch and Jaurés retained some of the skepticism of Sidgwick, James, and Dilthey, arguing that no amount of planning and expertise could ever provide for the smooth integration of individual and collective interests. Because they believed the rule of talented elites would undermine democracy, rather than create socialism, the ethical project of transcending possessive individualism and of expanding political participation was elevated above the concern for efficiency and harmony.

In contrast to the social democrats, Bourgeois, Hobhouse, Weber, Lippmann, Croly, and Dewey launched their reformist program not from within socialism but liberalism. Progressive liberals also renounced possessive individualism and *laissez faire* capitalism, and called for an ethical transformation that would increase social regulation of the market. They were wary of social democratic proposals for a substantial expansion of the state and "radical" alteration of capitalism. With the exception of Weber, however, they imagined a more significant break with existing socio-political realities than was proposed by the technocratic socialists or achieved by the New Deal Democrats. As Kloppenberg shows, these progressive liberals believed that political change "must be considered only a springboard to further, more far-reaching, cultural changes. . . ," and, in their absence, "the promise of liberation contained in the welfare state rang hollow. . ." (373] In particular, radical progressives, like Dewey, sought a path to socially responsible individualism and associational life aimed at public good that was never integrated into New Deal or later welfare state politics.

Kloppenberg claims that the achievements of Weber and Dewey tower over those of both generations. Weber's politics differed sharply from the progressive liberals because he considered radical democracy an illusion and rejected the collapse of morality into politics. Weber's methodological individualism and extreme pessimism about achieving even limited normative agreements caused him to give strong emphasis to the fragmentation and meaninglessness that follow from cultural rationalization and social differentiation. Weberian modernity is suffused with irresolvable value conflicts and multifarious struggles over diverse material and ideal interests. While Weber shares an appreciation for the civilizing effects of the advances in the practical arts and the increased precision

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in the calculation of social consequences, he did not see either socially responsible individualism or increased consciousness of public good on the horizon of modernity. He called for a constitutional government with a powerful virtuoso leadership selected for its ability to deal soberly with extreme uncertainty and to keep conflicting factions within peaceful boundaries. Although the skeptical features of his approach to capitalism have affinity for *via media* thought, Weber's rejection of normatively critical social "science" and his exceedingly thin conception of democracy locate him outside the progessive orbit.

On the opposing side, Dewey used his radical theory of knowledge to develop a cultural critique of "organized capitalism." Attempting to limit the power of the state and to preserve autonomous individuality, he argued for strong democracy and a linkage of moral education to politics that contradicted Weber's approach: "No government by experts in which the masses do not have the chance to inform the experts as to their needs can be anything but an oligarchy managed in the interests of the few. And the enlightenment must proceed in ways which force the administrative specialists to take account of the needs. The world has suffered more from leaders and authorities than from the masses."[5] However, the conditions necessary for strong democrcay — an educated citizenry, vibrant local communities, an active public sphere, and mass political participation — have not been secured under organized capitalism. The masses must learn first how to overcome their cultural "bewilderment"; publics must be created, define their problems, and organize to pursue their needs.

The political fallout from the disastrous Treaty of Versailles, resurgent nationalism, the red scare, and the capitalist offensive left progressives dispirited. In the new postwar climate thinkers such as Croly and Lippmann gave up on strong democracy. Dewey, however, stayed on the progressive course, completing much of his most penetrating critical work (e.g., *The Quest for Certainty*, *The Public and its Problems*, *Individualism Old and New*, *Liberalism and Social Action*, *Freedom and Culture*) after 1920. In his later writings, he discussed the enormous barriers (e.g., the towering class and power systems, mind-killing schools and work settings, widespread cultural conservatism, and the growing threat of totalitarianism) to reviving publics and participatory politics. However, he contended that a growing contradiction between possessive individualism and the expanding system of regional, national, and international interdependence had mounting social and political costs that could not be ignored. He believed that the interdependence made possible, and even called out for, a new social individualism that would moderate the contradictions of organized capitalism.

Because neither social individualism nor awareness of interdependence arise automatically, Dewey attempted to reach as wide an audience as possible with his writings. He hoped that public intellectuals, like himself, would be an important force in the struggle for cultural change. Considering schools a particularly important institutional battleground, his program of progressive education

5. Dewey, *The Later Works*, vol. 2, *op.cit.*, p. 365.

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was designed to nurture the intellectual and ethical capacities required to grasp interdependence and to prepare children for participation in a democratic cultural transformation. In the end, Dewey stood firm against the technocratic winds that were blowing gale force by the 1930s, but he was disappointed by the growing armies of professionals who let his democratic project languish.

Uncertain Victory is a rich intellectual history, characterized by much scholarly breadth, penetrating vision, and considerable originality. Throughout the narrative, the theoretically inclined reader is confronted with historical variations and subtleties that uphold uncertainty and encourage modesty in theorizing. The work is especially good at expressing the richness of American thought and at demonstrating that it deserves increased attention in the current continental debates over democracy. In conclusion, Kloppenberg writes: "We must accept responsibility for selecting our values and acting to realize our ideals without the comfort of a formula yielding easy answers to difficult questions. We must live with our uncertainty instead of trying to escape it. All these thinkers envisioned a society in which equality guarantees the exercise of freedom, and in which individuals measure fulfillment against the criterion of benevolence. The 20th century has rubbed some of the shine from their dream by demonstrating that man is capable of less than they hoped and more than they feared. The persistence of power has corroded the political institutions and the civic virtue they trusted to secure their ideals. While their victory has thus proved uncertain, their dream of democracy should survive." (416). Kloppenberg suggests the progressives, especially Dewey, formulated an unfinished and still viable cultural project. Democracy is back on the agenda today. A wide range of Left theorists have endorsed radical democracy, and even postmodernists express the same affinity, although less directly, in their endorsements of pluralism and attacks on totalities. The substantive features of democracy, however, are usually left vague, as are the paths to achieve it. And those who have called for the creation of "discursive" democracy have substituted a formal and abstract approach for Dewey's historicism and activist methodology. Dewey also emphasized methodological rather than substantive matters. He pointed to sociological features of modernity that favored democratization, framed a program for cultural change with explicity institutional targets, and carried his program to the public. While this theory is susceptible to criticism, Dewey's approach expressed a sensitivity for the complexities of achieving a radical democracy and contained a rich normative vision.

Although culturally important, democracy has become a cliché. On the Left it is often a substitute for Marxist programs that went astray. This is not to suggest that contemporary thinkers simply need to shift to specifics and programmatics. The point is that Kloppenberg's study demonstrates the enormity of the problem of democracy when it is taken as a serious goal. Progressive thought ought to be reappropriated so that theorists who speak casually of the need for radical democracy will come to understand the problems involved. The progressives'

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radical historicist and anti-foundationalist approach expresses a deep appreciation of particularity without giving up the holistic vision needed to support a moral rhetoric of community and of social change. Dewey criticized American society on the basis of a moral rhetoric with deep American roots, and this feature is what animated his public philosophy. Those who want to move criticism from behind the walls of academe must speak a language that critically builds on regional and national traditions, symbols, and values. This critical project requires constructive as well as deconstructive geneologies that address the new forms of later 20th century cultural fragmentation and interdependence, and therefore go beyond Dewey's analysis of American society. However, Dewey's radical historicist methodology would contribute significantly to this effort.

Robert Antonio

Commodification and Sexology

Paul Robinson, *The Modernization of Sex: Havelock Ellis, Alfred Kinsey, William Masters & Virginia Johnson* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).
Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1980).
David Greenberg, *The Construction of Homosexuality* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 635.

Until recently, the history of sexology has been characterized by underdevelopment. Of course, there is a vast critical literature on Freud and his followers. But this literature excludes Freud's forgotten contemporaries. Who has ever heard of James Kiernan or Albert Moll? Until recently, by treating psychoanalysis discovered by Freud as *the* truth about sex, historians have stood in the way of a real history of sexology. Only since the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s has a critical historiography of sexology begun to emerge. Paul Robinson's *Modernization of Sex* and Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, both originally published in 1976, provide two radically different accounts. The reissuing of the former as well as the continued influence of the latter invite a reassessment of both works in the context of what we know today.

As Robinson himself admits, *The Modernization of Sex* is an example of what might be called the "Whig history of sexology" and represents the triumph of modern liberty over Victorian prudery. That prudery had "all but denied

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woman a sexual existence" and excommunicated unruly sexual deviants. In contrast, sexologists were "sexual enthusiasts" whose work rehabilitated the reputations of erotic non-conformists, male and female alike. Robinson's book is thus a barely concealed polemic for sexual revolution. Certainly, however, he stands by the Enlightenment credo that knowledge is a weapon against power (3).

It is precisely the Enlightenment relation between knowledge and power that Foucault has inverted in his work. Analyses of *The History of Sexuality* have generally begun with Foucault's rejection of the so-called "repressive hypothesis," or with the theory of power it implied. In arguing against the "Whig" assumption that sex was "repressed" during the 19th century only to be "liberated" in the 20th, Foucault, the critics say, was jettisoning the idea that there was a sex to be repressed in favor of the hypothesis that sex itself was historically constituted as part of an ideology of repression. For Foucault, then, sexology is a new and more subtle form of power rather than a technique of empowerment.[1]

If Robinson and Foucault present diametrically opposing accounts of sexology, this is reflected in their equally divergent methodologies. Robinson is a skilled writer able to make incisive comments along the way without tying them into any larger systematic explanation. His method is descriptive rather than analytic, empirical rather than theoretical. Instead of looking at sexology as a whole, *Modernization* focuses on several "influential" figures such as Havelock Ellis, Alfred Kinsey, William Masters and Virginia Johnson. While Robinson subjects each of their writings to a thorough if not very systematic examination, his method leaves much to be desired. All intellectual historians must choose "representitive" thinkers but, it is safe to say, the smaller the number, the more problematic the sample. Robinson's choices get mixed reviews. Certainly, his decision to choose Kinsey was on the mark. Kinsey's importance as a theoretician is increasingly evident. But his decision to include Masters and Johnson was probably a mistake since they represent only one of many trends today. The real flaw in Robinson's work was its exclusion of Freud in favor of Ellis. While it may be a just revenge for all the years historians of psychoanalysis have excluded the other schools from *their* histories, the exclusion of Freud weakens Robinson's book by robbing it of what should have been its core. Nevertheless, *The Modernization of Sex* does show that sexology is on balance progressive and liberating. The reduction of intellectual history to intellectual biography personalizes sexology, while the emphasis on relatively familiar Anglo-American figures such as Ellis and Kinsey over the more forbidding continental thought of Krafft-Ebing and Freud presents sexology as a demystifying discipline rather than a manipulative ideology.

If Robinson personalizes the history of sexology, Foucault completely depersonalizes it. His account is self-consciously "inhuman" in that he dismisses

1. For two excellent discussions of Foucault, see Rebecca Comay, "Escavating the Repressive Hypothesis: Aporias of Liberation in Foucault," *Telos* 67 (Spring 1986), pp. 111-19, and Jean Baudrillard, "Forgetting Foucault," *Humanities in Society* 3 (Winter 1980).

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humanism and its belief in progress, science and liberation. Individual sexologists are hardly mentioned in *The History of Sexuality* so that intellectual history is purged of intellectual biography. Even when Foucault restores psychoanalysis to its central position, it is not Freud the man but Freudianism that is being restored. Foucault's methodology merely reinforces his pessimistic view of sexology by treating its history in the most cold and abstract manner possible.

Both Robinson and Foucault see sexology as part of the Enlightenment tradition. But while the former believes that tradition had not yet triumphed and still needs defending today, the latter understands the Enlightenment only as a false liberation to be subverted and transcended. Perhaps these differences explain why Robinson wrote an uncharacteristically vicious review of *The History of Sexuality* where he denounced Foucault's book as "very close to being a fraud." Unfortunately, just as Ellis was eclipsed by Freud, Robinson's work has been completely overshadowed by Foucault.[2]

This is unfortunate because the ideal treatment of sexology would be a synthesis of Foucault and Robinson. This is because both works suffer from grave deficiencies. Robinson is no theoretician just as Foucault is no empiricist. But it is also the case that Robinson's conclusions are often better than his methodology, while Foucault's methodology is consistently better than his conclusions. Thus, Robinson does not deal with the "repressive hypothesis," but situates sexology in the larger cultural shift "from 1890 to 1910." In contrast, Foucault's periodization has always been problematic. He has consistently ignored the cultural mutation at the end of the 19th century only to open up chasms elsewhere — in this case, in the 17th century.

Robinson's distinction between a sexual traditionalism based on "popular prejudices" and an enlightened sexual modernism may be banal, but Foucault merely inverts this sociological Manicheanism by distinguishing between a traditional *ars erotica* and the much more sinister modernist *scientia sexualis*. In place of Robinson's optimistic outlook, Foucault simply substitutes the pessimistic assumption that all discourses, even allegedly liberating ones, ultimately imply a limitation of possibilities and new controls. Thus Foucault's position is even more untenable than Robinson's since it implies that all theories (including his) merely function as grids of control. The extreme relativism of this position can only relativize itself out of existence.

Yet, both Robinson and Foucault can be valuable. Foucault can supplement Robinson's history of sexology with his reminder that successive version of sexology are all conservative in the sense that all intellectual movements become conservative in a society predicated on change. Within such a context, disciplines such as political economy or sexology can substitute for a vanishing social structure. Sexual discourse has thus served as an organizing principle rendering overt coercion superfluous. Yet, it would be a mistake to suggest, with Foucault,

2. Paul Robinson, "Review of *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction* by Michel Foucault," *The New Republic* (October 28, 1978), p. 32.

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that such a discourse will be more coercive, or even as coercive, as earlier and more direct forms of coercion. On the contrary, the very multiplication of sexual discourses which Foucault finds so oppressive may well be a sign of their increasing ineffectiveness. And this ineffectiveness may in turn be related to the profound instability of Western scientific discourses.

Neither Foucault nor Robinson explore this ambiguity. Successive versions of sexology reflect successive defensive strategies against socio-cultural change so that a given sexology may simultaneously extend freedom and act as a defense against still more sexual freedom. As sexology concedes one ideological battle after another, it continually retrenches and redefines its defenses.

In the latter part of the 19th century, sexology inherited the distinction between "natural" (or procreative) and "unnatural" (or non-procreative) sex. Heterogenital intercourse was deemed to be natural, while all other variations were dismissed as errors. It was in this context that Darwinism made variation itself the heart of evolutionary processes and, in so doing, marked the beginning of the subversion of the sexual absolutism of the Enlightenment. Ignored by both Foucault and Robinson, it was Darwin who turned sex into a contested field so that sexology could emerge as a discipline torn between the absolutism of heterogenital sex and the increasing democratization of desire on the other.

The more sexology discovered increasingly complex and subtle variations, the more it became necessary to explain them away as distortions of the normal heterogenital impulse. An early strategy to do so was to associate the overstimulation of the nervous system in "high" civilizations with excessive stimulation and the consequent appearance of abnormal tastes. Under conditions of overstimulation, some sexologists argued, chance contacts and accidental "mental associations" might result in fetishism. Another way of explaining away perversion was to emphasize a chance association so traumatic that it was sufficient to distort sexual life. In his "seduction theory," Freud rooted perversion in the actual molestation of children. This early theory treated perversion as "false" consciousness resulting from the deflection of natural sexuality by a traumatic event.

Sexology thus began by denying the perverse. But by admitting the variety and extent of perversion, early sexologists subverted the hegemony of heterogenitality. If perverse sexuality could be traced to the distortion of normal sex under conditions of overstimulation or in the wake of childhood seduction, the widespread character of this "distortion" could no longer be denied. Perversion began to be seen as natural after Freud's rejection of the seduction theory in 1896-7 in favor of an oedipal theory grounded in the assumption of a polymorphous perverse human nature. This relativization of sex precipitated the displacement of the distinction between heterogenitality and its distortions with the distinction between advanced and primitive sexuality. Having finally recognized the reality of the perverse, sexology stigmatized it as primitive.

Sulloway has shown how sexologists were able to link women's, children's

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and perverse sexuality to different stages of development.[3] The classic work of Freud, Ellis, Krafft-Ebing, Lombroso, Moll and Kiernan at the the turn of the century was based on the assumption that the sexuality of women, children and perverts was "underdeveloped." Despite its usefulness in upholding remnants of the older idea of heterogenital normality, this developmental model contained the seeds of a further relativization and democratization of sex. For that model, which depended on the possibility of ranking individuals in a hierarchy based on degrees of sexual differentiation ran into trouble in dealing with individuals who exhibited both "primitive" and "advanced" characteristics. Thus, Ellis pointed out that "inverted" behavior associated with the opposite sex (such as crossdressing) could be found in a completely heterosexual individual.[4]

Neither Ellis nor other people working along the same lines were able to develop their insights into a comprehensive critique of the increasingly conservative (and thus useful) developmentalism of Freud and his followers. Despite Robinson's insistence on the importance of Ellis, sexology remained focused on psychoanalysis until around 1950. It was only then that Kinsey's work began to have an impact in the US, where the early acceptance of Freudian ideas had rapidly transformed what had once been a subversive science into a conservative guardian of the traditional sexual order. Kinsey expanded sexual relativism along two axes. As Robinson points out, his emphasis on orgasm over act tended to democratize all forms of sexual behavior by treating them as merely alternative "outlets." Similarly, his rejection of the vaginal orgasm challenged the idea that women were more primitive than man because they possessed a remnant of undifferentiated androgyny (the clitoris).

Both Foucault and Robinson point out the radical implications of the historization of sexology. Among other things, this has led to a redefinition of the relation between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Since many cultures tolerate and even encourage such relations, much of the recent literature on homosexuality has taken a comparative approach to find out why the West in general and the US in particular is so homophobic. Thus it is not surprising that, following on Karlen's and Tripp's footsteps,[5] David Greenberg has written a massive ethno-sexological survey of the world.

The Construction of Homosexuality is conventionally organized and surveys homosexuality in kinship-structured, archaic, ancient, feudal, early capitalist and contemporary cultures. The endless succession of facts, disconnected theories and asides, accompanied by a running commentary on which societies, groups or individuals practiced or did not practice homosexuality creates a voyeuristic atmosphere reminiscent of hazy smoke in a dimly-lit nightclub. This is a unfortunate

3. Frank Sulloway, *Freud: Biologist of the Mind—Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

4. See Havelock Ellis, "Sexo-Aesthetic Inversion," *The Alienist and Neurologist* 34 (1913), pp. 249-79.

5. Arlo Karlen, *Sexuality and Homosexuality* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971) and C.A. Tripp, *The Homosexual Matrix* (New York: Signet, 1975).

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because Greenberg deals with serious questions. His enthusiasm, however, has overwhelmed his thesis: the argument is lost in a sea of facts. The failure to integrate theoretical and empirical dimensions is crippling.

Greenberg ultimately argues that the distinction between heterosexual and homosexual is only a modern Western distinction. To make this point, he notes that most premodern societies did not recognize *one* kind of homosexuality but a number of different types of relations. Thus, he distinguishes between "*transgenerational* (in which the partners are of disparate ages), *transgenderal* (the partners are of different genders), and *egalitarian* (the partners are socially similar) homosexuality" (25). While some societies stigmatized all these relations, others accepted one or more of them.

Greenberg's typology, however, may be misleading and anachronistic. Since his "transgenerational" and "transgenderal" forms are both relations between dissimilars, they may have been considered forms of heterosexuality. In such societies, the "pretty" boy, the transvestite, the transsexual and even the male slave were simply annexed to the category of the feminine so that men were perfectly free to have sex with them without violating the fundamental principle that sex should be between dissimilar and thus unequal partners. This explains the widely recognized fact that many traditional cultures originally distinguished between active and passive roles among dissimilars rather than between male and female.[6] The organization of sex into active and passive roles, which survives down to the present in certain parts of the world, thus permits men to penetrate younger, effeminate, socially inferior men as well as women and remain men. In contrast, the confusion of roles associated with an egalitarian homosexual relation between social similars is rarely tolerated, or at least rarely institutionalized among adults, in highly civilized societies (71).

In contrast to premodern but highly organized societies which institutionalized homosexual relations between dissimilars, modern society has evolved a complex system of homosexuality among equals — even as it stigmatizes it. In the last 200 pages of his book, Greenberg discusses how this form of stigmatized but egalitarian homosexuality came to supplant the more tolerated but less egalitarian forms. Here he focuses on the effect of the growth of bureaucracy in the West on sexual attitudes. Following Weber and Freud, Greenberg argues that the process of state-building and bureaucratization ultimately "internalized [a] male-male intimacy" since such intimacy threatened to break down the impersonality and competitiveness necessary in the development of a complex government (448). Moreover, by 1900 "bureaucratic principles spread to large number of worksites, so that for the first time in history most men began to experience the sort of adult socialization that we have argued would lead to antipathy to homosexuality" (452). This, however, conflicts with Greenberg's claim that "by the early decades of the twentieth century there were neighborhoods

6. This is, for example, alluded to by Freud in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 1962), p. 15, note 1.

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and social mileux in the larger American cities where same-sex couples could live relatively unmolested and wider homosexual networks could be sustained" (456-57), nor does it explain how an increasingly bureaucratized society could give rise to the gay liberation movement.

Recent work on gender points out that Western society was originally concerned less with sexual than with political order. Until the French Revolution, the West had institutionalized the old Indo-European division of society into three estates, the first devoted to prayer, the second to combat and the third to the production and reproduction of social wealth. The primacy of this distinction between clergy, nobility and commonality was registered in the way gender was encased within order. While there were unequal sexual functions within each of the three orders, inequality between them was much more significant. In Baroque courts, this led to a kind of androgyny. The emergence of the modern state at the expense of the upper two orders created this androgyny by reducing aristocratic courtiers of both sexes to human ornaments in the royal household. In the Baroque court, *both* sexes engaged in affairs, took lovers, dressed in beautiful clothes and lived in parasitic indolence. But in the 18th century, the intensification of the demands of the competitive modern state led to a further rationalization of its resources and thus a critique of the conspicuous and ineffecient waste of court society. The 18th century thus witnessed an increasingly "bourgeois" critique of the Old Regime and its psychosexual structure. Enlightenment thinkers began to write as if the emancipation of the male population from surviving feudal inequities and the corresponding growth in the state's efficiency depended on the enslavement of the female population. What happened after 1789 was a radical reorganization of gender. Society was restructured so that all men theoretically stood within the polity, while women were lumped together and expelled from that polity. In other words, the Enlightenment did not so much abolish political inequality in favor of liberty and equality as make the division between males and females the new form of political inequality so that sex (and race) became the ideological limit of democracy.[7]

According to Stoianovich, the revolutionary assertion of the bourgeois stratum of the third estate against the upper two (clerical and noble) in the latter part of the 18th century was a process of "virilization." During this period, the emancipated third function, previously relegated to production and reproduction, constituted itself as the nation. It reorganized itself into a new order in which masculine production became sharply opposed to feminine reproduction. Moreover, the early capitalism which emerged during this period demanded the existence of a feminine "nether economy" to provision the masculine "political economy," thus accentuating the distinction between the two sexual functions.

7. Joan Landes, *Women and the Public Sphere in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Linda Nicholson, *Gender and History: The Limits of Social Theory in the Age of the Family* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986); Traian Stoianovich, "Gender and Family; Myths, Models and Ideologies," *History Teacher* 15 (November 1981), pp. 67ff.

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Finally, the exigencies of the competitive state began to lead to an increasing stress on human perfectability, population expansion and self-discipline.[8]

Thus the Enlightenment ushered in a situation in which biological sex was supposed to correspond to gender, a situation in which all men were supposed to be active and all women passive. Under these circumstances, there was a profound emphasis on sexual difference including, as Stoianovich has noted, an emphasis on the differentiation of male from female space among those classes which set the standard for society as a whole. After 1750, male fashion began to become increasingly severe and undecorative, while male nudity was ever more rarely portrayed by artists. Men looked at women, but women were ever more reluctant to look at men so that male vanity was stigmatized. In other words, the androgyny and dandyism characteristic of 18th century court society was increasingly marginalized. This polarization of the sexes stigmatized as abnormal those men and women who would not conform to this new and highly dichotimized sexual order. Male effemininity especially was increasingly associated with sexual irregularity (386ff).

It is interesting to see how sexology simultaneously shaped and was shaped by the sociological context within which it arose. Previous epochs had admitted the possibility that biological men were unequal, and thus may function as women, children or slaves. Consequently, there was the possibility of a socially acceptable "transgenderal" homosexuality between dissimilar men. Over and against the remnants of the feudal order and the androgynous culture of the Baroque the Enlightenment introduced the idea of equality and interchangeability among all biological men. Confronted with the fact that it was inconvenient after all to treat all men as equal, this led to the conclusion that not all men were actual biological males. In other words, to avoid admitting that there could be social inequality among biological equals, social inferiors ended up classified as really biological inferiors. Sexology merely elaborated this careless biologizing. Inheriting the polarized Enlightenment model which considered all biological males as free and equal citizens, sexology treated the sexual function as a relation between unequals. Rather than admit the possibility of sexual desire (and thus inequality) between biological males, the early sexologists were prepared to argue that passive, feminine and deviant males were not biological males at all, but inverted, intermediate or underdeveloped forms suspended between male and female. Middle-class medicine thus completed the work of the Enlightenment by stigmatizing aristocratic androgyny as biological abnormality.

Ironically, the very polarization of the sexes which stigmatized effeminate males and masculine females as biologically intermediate and abnormal, protected and even encouraged homosexual behavior among "masculine" males and "feminine" females. While sexology in the latter part of the 19th century had shed a lurid light on gender non-conformists, revealing them to be biological

8. John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity," in Ann Snitow *et al.*, *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 102ff.

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non-conformists, the "hypervirile" and "ultra-feminine" (to use Carpenter's flamboyant phrasing) could still enjoy the company of their own sex while remaining in the various "homosocial milieus" that had proliferated in Western Europe after the abolition of the aristocracy's salon culture.

As Altman has pointed out, however, the advanced capitalism that began to emerge after 1880 reversed many of these trends. The expanded production of goods thus began to demand the equal participation of women, children and workers, as well as middle class men, in the economy as consumers whose desire was as valuable as their labor. Advanced capitalism began to erode the separate spheres, further reducing the two-function male-female caste system, which the Enlightenment had put in place of the older tripartite system of orders, to a single function united by consumption. The tendency toward the dichotomization of the sexes was thus gradually reversed. Between 1900 and 1920, the merging of male and female spaces and the spread of coeducation tended to expose those masculine men and feminine women who desired their own sex even as it began the rehabilitation of effeminate men and masculine women. Thus sexologists began to consider transvestitism and certain other forms of gender abnormality as heterosexual rather than homosexual phenomena. Conversely, homosexuality was increasingly defined in terms of an attraction between similars and equals. Indeed, as George Chauncey has noted, it was only at this point that the modern terms "heterosexual" and "homosexual" began to gain currency. Once the distinction between biological male and female began to erode under the pressure of an advanced capitalist economy that increasingly viewed the desire of the two sexes as interchangeable, the old theories of inverted, intermediate or indeterminate biology became outmoded. But the homogenization of male and female sexual *subjects* practically required the construction of a distinction between male and female sexual *objects* to maintain gender if only in an attenuated form. It was in this context that Freud specified the separation of the sexual object from the sexual subject (instinct), thus enabling the latter to choose among objects. The heterosexual and homosexual forms of desire emerge as the two great divisions of consumer preference.[9]

But the homogenization of male and female sexual subjects must inevitably be followed by the homogenization of male and female sexual objects and thus the consequent abolition of the distinction between heterosexuality and homosexuality itself. These two great categories of desire appear to be the last defense against the disappearance of the two sexes within consumerism. In this sense, the US homosexual in the 1990s, like the German Jews in the 1930s, are absolutely necessary. Just as the 1930s Jews became a representation of the emerging postmodern culture many Germans had themselves guiltily embraced, so today's homosexual has become a symbol of the still further development of that

9. Dennis Altman, *The Homosexualization of America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), pp. 79-107; Lawrence Birken, *Consuming Desire: Sexual Science and the Emergence of a Culture of Abundance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), pp. 92-113.

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culture. The post-Darwinian trend toward relativism and democratization, as well as the growing interchangeability of people and objects, are implicit in the consumer culture. As early as the 1870s, the marginalist revolution in economic theory (which still sustains the Right) pointed in the direction of consumerist relativism by abolishing the idea of a universal measure of value in favor of the concept of a radically idiosyncratic determination of economic life. When even the distinction between male and female breaks down, there is only the individual. When women begin to look at men as men have looked at women, then both sexes become equally vain and narcissistic. When desire and marketability are core values, the most abandoned promiscuity becomes a secret virtue. But it is precisely at this point that the division between heterosexual and homosexual becomes the last barrier against anarchy. Society comes to hate the homosexual in proportion to its own homogenization and thus homosexualization. It is merely a matter of projecting universal cultural tendencies on homosexuals. It is the homosexual, and not all of us, who is narcissistic, promiscuous, anarchic and boundlessly "oral." It is he who is the hungry consumer. This is how the homosexual has become the Jew in the Age of Desire.

Lawrence Birken

Obsessive Democracy

Carol Gould, *Rethinking Democracy: Freedom, Social Cooperation in Politics, Economy and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Frank Cunningham, *Democratic Theory and Socialism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987).

The present Left obsession with democracy has been brought about largely by the fading of the New Left in the 1970s, the subsequent hardening of an orthodox Marxism-Leninism and eventually a rejection of Marxist theory in general. This was buttressed by the development of social movements in the 1960s and 70s, which reinforced the rejection of class as the decisive basis for social domination. The resulting theoretical vacuum has necessitated the rethinking of political theory in a context characterized by the collapse of "really existing socialism" and the rise of Gorbachev. Most of the Left in the West strongly supported reforms understood as a prelude to a new form of democratic socialism. Thus democratization came to be seen as a solution to all of Marxism's problems — a solution applicable to the West as well. It is unclear,

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however, to what extent democratic theory is central in the West today.

Carol Gould's *Rethinking Democracy* and Frank Cunningham's *Democratic Theory and Socialism* are two attempts to reexamine democratic theory within such a framework. Both suggest changing the economy to expand democracy in order to promote individual freedom. The focus can be explained in terms of the Left's previous inadequate attention to individual freedom. Gould argues that democracy and individual freedom require workers' control, and Cunningham claims socialism means economic and material equality, and that it is necessary to expand democracy (itself justified by the promotion of individual freedom). Both accounts remain within a Marxist productivist framework. Neither deals with the relation of economic and political institutions, and both uncritically assume the primacy of economic institutions. Given these *lacunae*, neither discusses potential constraints political institutions can legitimately impose on economic institutions, or whether other values can justify limiting individual freedom and democracy.

Gould's main claim is that democracy should be expanded to the workplace. She combines a traditional notion of freedom and the Marxist notion of self-development through control of the means of production with the Anglo-American tradition of individual rights, producing a rights-based argument for workers' self-management. She argues for workers' rather than government control of work within a market socialist economy and representative democracy. Where possible, participatory democracy should be instituted at the local level. She grants the importance of negative freedom as the absence of interference but maintains that this cannot substitute for freedom as self-development. Considerable positive conditions are necessary for the exercise of the latter. She posits the right to participate in decision-making in joint activities and to develop oneself: "Freedom is freedom to develop oneself through one's action or as a process of realizing one's projects through activity in the course of which one forms one's character and develops capacities" (40).

In her discussion of human rights, Gould denies a sharp distinction between basic and non-basic rights (203) or that civil and political rights have priority over economic and social rights (205). Unlike other theories of human rights, she claims that her own is not individualistic since it recognizes each person as a "social being or individuals-in-relation" (208), whose self-development requires "reciprocity" and recognition of the other and of the necessary "cooperation and support" (72). This becomes the foundation for "non-hierarchical" authority understood as "shared authority among the members of a group . . . compatible with participation" (222), and in which "individuals have freely chosen to participate in that activity and in the determination of the shared ends" (233). On the basis of a theory of action, she claims that workers have a right to self-development in the workplace. When self-development is dependent on joint activities, this entails a right to participate in decision-making in that joint activity, i.e, workers' control. Although direct participation is preferable, where unavoidable, a system of representation is permissible. Workers should participate in determining the ends of such joint activities through "discussion, deliberation

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and debate concerning actions to be taken or ends to be pursued" (239).

Gould claims to build on Macpherson's notion of freedom as a positive right to self-development. Her own definition of freedom, however, is based on three conditions which she does not distinguish: (1) the development of moral, social or cognitive capacities, (2) the development of character or identity , and (3) the realization of long-term goals. It is unclear whether each is sufficient for self-development or whether they are all necessary. It is thus not clear what freedom to develop oneself means. It cannot be any self-development, but only what the agents themselves wanted and tried to bring about. Although self-development is common, often it is not because the agents themselves intended it. Many people are not particularly concerned about developing their capacities. As for the second condition, the development of character and identity is so strongly influenced by factors beyond one's control that this cannot be the realm of freedom. In the case of the third condition, while long term plans are usually realized, if at all, by intentional activity, all people do not privilege long term, as opposed to short term, plans. A less tendentious conception of freedom would simply be in terms of realizing one's goals. But this is not much different from the common notion of freedom as the ability to exercise one's choice.

In response to the objection that people do not want to develop their capacities, Gould rebuts that they do, and that they usually develop themselves (55). But even if people develop themselves, it is not usually because that is what they intended. It often happens as a side effect. At any rate, Gould provides no evidence for her claim that people do, in fact, want self-development.

Gould first argues for the right to self-development, and then for the right to workers' control. Her first argument mistakenly identifies the capacity to make choices with the capacity for self-development. She argues as follows: Free choice is a necessary condition for being an agent. In making choices, people develop themselves and realize their goals. Therefore, free choice is the "capacity" for self-development and self-development is a necessary condition for being an agent. People have a right to self-development and the conditions necessary for its realization (61). But all Gould is entitled to claim is that free choice is a necessary condition for self-development (40), not that self-development is identical with choice. In addition, it does not follow that people have a right to free choice in every activity they participate in. On the basis of this, Gould goes on to argue for a right to workers' control, and decision-making in cultural and social institutions. The argument goes as follows: Self-development requires being able to determine one's actions. If there is a right to self-development, there is a right to those conditions necessary for the exercise of this freedom. But joint activities are among the conditions necessary for self-development (84), and participation in decision-making in these activities is itself a condition for being an agent and exercising choice in such joint activities. Therefore, the right to self-development entails extending democracy to the economic sphere. She calls this a "principle of democracy" in that "every person who engages in a common activity with others has an equal right to participate in making decision concerning

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such activity" (84). This is both too broad and too narrow. It is too broad, in that it requires much more participation than she intends. If others are engaged in an activity which affects my self-development, then, according to this argument, whether or not I am a participant in that activity, I should have a say concerning what goes on there. Thus, as a pianist, I should have a say in how pianos are built, even if I am not a piano-maker. In Gould's conclusion, which does not follow from her argument, she does not spell out what counts as "engaging in the same activity." Why is not everyone in some sense engaged in the joint activity of making society function? Gould denies that all of society or the state is entitled to make decisions in a given enterprise, but she does not indicate how to determine when persons are and are not "engaged in the same activity."

Gould's arguments are too narrow in that to be an agent in an activity does not require one to participate in making substantive decisions about the nature of the activity. Gould's demand for agency would be satisfied so long as the individual simply had the right to decide whether or not to participate. For example, if baseball contributes to my self-development, then so long as I have a choice to play or not, I am an agent, even if I have no choice in setting the rules of the game or deciding when or under what conditions the game is played.

Gould's deployment of this argument in defense of workers' control unwarrentedly assumes that work constitutes the main form of self-development — which implies that those who do not work cannot engage in self-development. Similarly, if some work does not provide an opportunity for self-development, workers have no right to participate in decision-making. Thus Gould's account actually works best for professional or skilled work, i.e., those activities which provide the most opportunity for self-development.

Gould's response is that there is no way of knowing in advance what contributes to self-development (86), so participation in decision-making must be allowed in all work. But this argument is weak in the way that all arguments based on strong skepticist premises are weak. In this case it is well known that some work is tedious and does not contribute to self-development. But Gould also develops another argument for workers' control, claiming that people have a right to determine the economic conditions necessary for their self-development by participating in decision-making concerning those matters (143). Decision-making about what? Either the "economic conditions" of self-determination refers to wages, or to the functioning of the economic order as a whole. In the former case, that justifies workers' control over wages alone. In the latter, it justifies workers having a say in general economic policies. In neither case does the argument justify control over the immediate conditions of work itself, e.g., the speed of the assembly line, or the assignment of tasks or other working conditions. Yet this is the very sort of control workers want most. At any rate, Gould explicitly claims that workers should have authority over "immediate conditions of work, policy and planning" (227), including "allocation of work, rates of production, hours of work, and work discipline" and wages, sales and reinvestment (250).

At various points Gould mentions that each person's self-determination is

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limited by an obligation "not to interfere with a like right on the part of others" (206, 213) and that "decisions that violate basic rights cannot have authority" (233, 238). She calls workers' rights only "*prima facie* rights" (179), but does not realize the serious implications this has in terms of restricting workers' rights to decision-making since there are so many individual rights that democratic decision-making in a firm might jeopardize. This is just one of the many places where Gould is faced with a conflict between democracy and liberalism. She simply avoids the whole issue. The real question is not whether there should be workers' control, but how much and what kind of workers' control is compatible with individual and collective rights. Similarly, workers' control can very well undermine political democracy by giving workers an overwhelming control over economic decisions. Nor does Gould say whether the issue of workers' control is itself democracratically decided, and whether this is decided in each firm or nationally. What if workers in a given firm refuse it? None of this is discussed. Gould's approach also begs the question whether it is possible to organize productive activities to provide for society's needs and also provide the conditions for individual self-development in the workplace. In this whole discussion there is little reference to concrete problems encountered by actual experiments in workers' councils, e.g., in Yugoslavia during the last couple of decades, where workers' self-management contributed to low capital development and high inflation, or in Turin after WWI, in Czechoslovakia in 1968. Furthermore, workers' control as such does not guarantee the prevention of racism or sexism — problems pervading the history of the labor movement and an equally urgent question today.

With traditional Marxists, Gould focuses on the workplace as the major source of alienation. But there are many different sources of social alienation. Her argument does not justify participation in decision-making in those activities in which one is not a direct participant, but which nevertheless seriously affect one's self-development as, e.g., the welfare agency affects the welfare recipient. She allows social and cultural institutions, especially those dependent on public funding (e.g., hospitals and universities) to have consumer representatives (227, 256), although "there should not be majority rule by the whole society upon these institutions" (256). Again, this is an equivocation. Either consumer representation is merely a token gesture, or an actual way to give recipients of services an effective say in the conditions of their self-development. Gould must either give up the strong workers' control she abstractly argues for, or make public participation merely token. When she comes down to specifics, her position is much more a compromise than her earlier arguments support, with a two tier system for workers' control and ownership (and workers' control only in some industries). Buried in a footnote, Gould states that some large industries may be exempted from workers' control — "utilities, railroads, and some natural resources." Industries in the marketplace, she claims, do not need consumer representatives since the market already provides consumers with a say. The relation between planning and the market is hardly mentioned, let

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alone concretized, leaving the notion of "market socialism" an empty rubric.

Gould's solutions are superficial and unconvincing, e.g., general planning and regulatory commissions to correct problems and fund new enterprises. These commissions are to be chosen by the general population through representatives from local political units, not firms (252-4). Apparently there is to be workers' control within firms, but no political system of workers' councils. If the commissions had power to make substantial economic plans, this would clearly weaken workers' control, and without such power they could not deal with economic problems. This is hardly enough. Gould's brief reference to regional and local decision-making bodies is interesting, but undeveloped: it is mentioned only in passing with no hint of how it relates to the parliamentary system.

Despite Gould's attempts to clothe her argument in individual rights theory — not typical Marxist language — she follows traditional Marxist lines in focusing on the economy and not on the political or social sphere, and fails to pay adequate attention to rights and interests of diverse groups in much the way that traditional Marxists do. The implication is that what needs reorganization in order to democratize Western societies is the inner structure of enterprises. Allegedly, therefore, no significant reorganization in the political or social institutions is necessary for genuine democratization. This type of reorganization, however, is not going to contribute much to democratization, and will simply reproduce the problems of capitalism.

Gould needs to consider much more seriously the problems of workers' control. Given the market conditions she presumes, there will be substantial inequalities between workers in successful firms and those in failing ones, precipitating the same inequality as in capitalism. Although Gould's own arguments are unclear, she does want workers to have control not only over local plant level decisions but also over the "distribution of the firm's income, including reinvestment in production, depreciation costs . . . the sale of the firm's products" (250). But this is far too much power, which grants one interest group — workers — direction of the economy to the exclusion of all other groups. Political institutions will once again be hamstrung by decisions made by these workers, and there will be little opportunity for the rest of society or other groups to participate in broad political decisions. This is hardly effective democratization. Even workers in the media, unless there are constraints, will not necessarily broaden public opportunity to participate in political discourse. Since Gould advocates workers' control and ownership in a market economy, there will presumably be stocks or their functional equivalent distributed among workers to legally define control. But in order to guarantee workers' control, stocks will have to be distributed only among workers in a particular enterprise. In a market system in which workers can change jobs, this becomes difficult to sustain while retaining workers' control. To make workers' control a matter of principle rather than a pragmatic issue ignores the problems of how to make the economic system efficient. It is much more problematic than Gould's arguments acknowledge, when the system of incentives and disincentives built into

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such workers' self-managment do and do not dovetail with social needs. There has been considerable opportunity to study how workers' councils work in Yugoslavia. Surprisingly, Gould does not deal with any of this.[1]

In contrast to Gould's book, Cunningham's account is more open-ended in its "socialist retrieval" of democracy (172). Capitalism, argues Cunningham, retards democracy by creating inequalities. On the other hand, by creating material equality, socialism promotes democracy, which is itself justified as promoting individual freedom and autonomy. Freedom here means the opportunity to exercise one's choice (55). At the same time, Cunningham rejects orthodox Left accounts which distinguish between "socialist" and "bourgeois" democracy (what he calls a "fragmentist approach" (35)): there are only different "degrees of democracy" (25ff, 68), determined by the extent to which people's actual preferences are satisfied.

According to Cunningham's "deliberately narrowly economic" definition of socialism (87), a system is socialist if it seeks material equality (85). Statist systems ruled by bureaucrats and Party officials are forms of "thin socialism"(85), since they still pretend to promote material equality. Why the intent should matter and how Cunningham *knows* is a mystery, given that these systems in reality promote inequalities and Party privilege. This definition of socialism purely in terms of material equality is highly problematic and compatible with great inequalities in social, political and economic power. It is not a definition in terms of equality in general, e.g., equality of life chances or even political, cultural and educational equality. Rather, it is much narrower in terms of material equality, which Cunningham privileges, claiming it promotes democracy by allowing people

1. Even more surprising is that in a rather superficial review of both Gould's and Cunningham's books in *Praxis International* — a journal historically rooted in Yugoslav dissidence of the 1960s (and thus inextricably grounded in the workers' council experience) — McBride does not mention *even once* this rich and highly educational experience. See William L. McBride in *Praxis International*, vol. 9, no. 2 (April-July 1989), pp. 193-200. Gould herself writes about the issue of workers' control without extensive reference to the literature on the subject. For a recent critical discussion of problems related to the introduction of workers' councils in Poland within the Solidarity government, see Miron Wolnicki, "Self-Government in Poland," in *Telos* 80 (Summer 1989), pp. 63-78. For a discussion of the historical obsolescence of the workers' council as a labor-elite reaction to Fordism, see Sergio Bologna, "Class Composition and the Theory of the Party," in *Telos* 13 (Fall 1972), pp. 4-27. For an extensive discussion of efforts to blend radical democracy and workers' control in Czechoslovakia in the late 60s, see Karel Kovanda, "Czechoslovak Workers' Council," in *Telos* 28 (Summer 1976), pp. 36-54. For a critical evaluation of the failure of the Yugoslav workers' council, see Antonio Carlo, "Capitalism and Crisis in Yugoslavia," in *Telos* 36 (Summer 1978), pp. 81-110. For a more positive evaluation of the prospects of reconciling workers' councils and radical democracy, see Andrei Szilard, "On the History of the Workers' Councils," in *Telos* 48 (Summer 1981), pp. 49-64. For a theoretical and historical analysis of the foundations of workers' self-management, see Gabrielle M. Bonacchi, "The Council Movement," in *Telos* 30 (Winter 1976-77), pp. 43-72. For a more recent effort to reconcile self-management and late capitalism, see Murray Bookchin, "Self-Management and New Technology," in *Telos* 41 (Fall 1979), pp. 5-16.

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people to be more autonomous, take risks, and be active political participants in a democratic process. Yet many other conditions are necessary to promote democracy. A system which is socialist in Cunningham's sense may discourage democratic participation by limiting it to Party members. By reducing socialism to material equality, Cunningham further overlooks the problem of how to determine what material equality means, especially in a highly differentiated society where people have a wide range of different changing needs. Under such circumstances, how can there be an objective determination of material equality?[2] He claims that democracy should include control over the social environment" (115) and our desires are part of our "social environment." As another example of superficiality, Cunningham never distinguishes control over desires from dictatorship over needs, with its disastrous totalitarian consequences. His extraordinarily hasty, uninformative discussion of these issues by reference to several different authors is utterly unenlightening. Such superficial discussion is typical of his book. Thus, when discussing objections to democracy, Cunningham simply offers homilies such as "people can and do rise to the occasion" (75).

Cunningham is agnostic about forms of ownership. Enterprises can be either controlled by workers or capitalists, as long as they preserve material equality. How this is to be done is never adequately addressed. According to him, when there are problems in enterprises, "human ingenuity" is probably "up to the job" (132) so long as democratic institutions are respected. In general, he supports a "democratic fix" (66, 101) — i.e., more democracy solves all problems, including all capitalist ills. But he never discusses how, concretely, this is to occur. There is more bald assertion than sustained reasoning, and never any discussion of how his conception is different from garden varieties of democratic pluralism.

In Part II, Cunningham claims that while liberal democracy is committed to equality, freedom and democracy (146), without priorities, he gives pride of place to democracy (170). Socialism presupposes democracy (rule of law, freedom from interference, pluralism and respect for rights) but he fails to spell out the kind of institutional arrangements that would guarantee this. Presumably it does not matter, so long as material equality is preserved. But this begs the question: how is material equality to be achieved? For Cunningham, socialism is to be brought about by parliamentary and extra-parliamentary means, as well as "social movements" (272). These means, however, are never identified.

His discussion of group rights within socialism is a three page exegesis of Allen Buchanan's arguments (174-77) — a rather long discussion of one particular topic for Cunningham. His account of socialist objections to liberal democracy deals with Ellen Wood's, John Hoffman's, and Milton Fisk's critiques, and in passing he makes random references to a few others. His discussion does not add anything to what has already been written. Thus, in

2. For a critique of this simplistic notion of equality and an account of how it dovetails into Marxist-Leninist authoritarianism (and the eventual obliteration of democracy) see Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller, "Forms of Equality," *Telos* 32 (Summer 1977), pp. 6-26, and Ferenc Feher, "The Dictatorship over Needs," *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 31-42.

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claiming that capitalism, contrary to appearances, does not value pluralism, he provides no argument, merely a string of assertions. In two pages he runs through a discussion of Nozick, a critic of Nozick, Castoriadis, Lucas, and Gayle Rubin on sex and gender systems, ending up with Eva Arnold, a Hungarian philosopher! Cunningham claims to be concerned with "middle level," non-foundational theory and practical matters (19-20, 32, 131). Not only does his account fail to add anything to the discussion of democracy and socialism, he appears overwhelmed by the existing literature. His footnotes are useful and substantial but the book as a whole reads like a series of tangents, and one is never quite certain where he stands.

Both works are eager to promote individual freedom but neither looks seriously at the conflicts between freedom and equality. Neither work has an historical perspective. Both books claim to appropriate and belong to a socialist discourse, but neither has any utopian dimension or confronts the pervasive problems of social alienation.

Both Gould and Cunningham fail to indicate what political movements today will be agents for democratization. In Gould's case this is serious, since she focuses on the workplace, where the labor movement today is in dire straits. Despite the massive evidence that the concerns that motivate people, the issues around which their identities are formed and around which they organize, can hardly be characterized in class terms, Gould goes back to the centrality of labor and thus disposes of 30 to 40 years of political theory. Both works fail to reconcile liberal values and democracy and neither pays adequate attention to political institutions or to concrete economic problems. At best, it shows that the nature of the socialist vision today is up for grabs and neither work convincingly shows that the answer can be found in democratic theory.

Nanette Funk

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Sartre's Paradox

Christina Howells, *Sartre: The Necessity of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 201 pp.

Paradox stimulates philosophical discourse, often fueling fierce battles about seemingly irreconcilable propositions. It is therefore hardly surprising that Sartre, who consigned the meaning of human reality to precarious formulations, would run into problems with philosophy's aversion to the slightest hint of contradiction. Traces of uneasiness can be detected even among the most sympathetic of his commentators who, in the attempt to explain and embrace Sartre's novelty, end up making it much too palatable. Many books about Sartre resemble the proverbial operation whose complete success killed the patient. In Christina Howells' marvelous volume, both author and subject triumph.

That "texts" lend themselves to multiple interpretations, including false ones, cannot be overestimated nor should it be credited as the trendy discovery of post/structuralist literary criticism.[1] Howells' sympathetic, yet critical study, relishes the multiple meanings, the intertextuality, and the possibility of "self-subversion" running through Sartrean texts. Above all, by casting the whole of Sartre in the context of a recurrent "dialectical paradox" never to be resolved in a hasty synthesis, she unveils the elemental problematic anchoring Sartre's polymorphy.

The key to this slim volume, and to Sartre himself, is the paradox entailed in her title, the "necessity of freedom." Far from just a clever insight, a catchy contradiction or yet another "reading" of Sartre on freedom, it offers a definitive clue to the open-endedness of Sartre, to his life, as well as to a whole series of other quandaries that enriched and simultaneously fed on this fundamental paradox. Howells' background in Sartre's aesthetic and literary studies and familiarity with his relation to Freud inform chapters on the novels, drama, literary theory, psychoanalysis, biography and autobiography. Last, yet crucial, comes a perspective on the "parricidal" generation of French theorists that (with the notable exceptions of Barthes and Deleuze) have rejected

1. Adorno muses: "Texts which anxiously undertake to record every step without omission inevitably succumb to banality, and to a monotony related not only to the tension induced in the reader but to their own substance. Simmel's writings, for example, are all vitiated by the incompatibility of their out-of-the ordinary subject matter with its painfully lucid treatment." In "Gaps," *Minima Moralia* (London: Verso, 1978), p. 80.

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Sartre's vision and tossed him off as anathema. Other chapters on Sartre's early philosophy and ethics, and later his Marxism, solidly fill out his chronological and intellectual evolution. Howells' stimulating work is clearly driven by the conviction that his thought, as well as all discussion about Sartre, must hinge upon an unequivocally all-encompassing perspective. By building this argument on the paradox of freedom, she pursues the gamut of Sartre's metamorphoses and illuminates the many shades of irony at the root of his enterprise.

The "necessity of freedom" is Sartre's own definition of the "notion" of freedom as it eventually crystallized in his last major work, *L'Idiot de la famille*. Throughout his life, Sartre has consistently explored the difference between "concepts" and "notions." The former are epistemological tools which enable their user to measure the unknown from "outside." In contrast, a notion like freedom describes particular trajectories of choices made in particular situations and, therefore, yielding different degrees of autonomy, always traceable back to lived circumstances. Thus, while "concepts" can be used synonymously with (traditional) "knowledge," "notions" correspond to "non-knowledge" (*non-savoir*). If social science studies man — the real unknown — through traditional categories, it forfeits this search by making man at once the subject and object of inquiry. Instead, non-codified knowledge has to rely on "understanding" by means of temporally dynamic notions.[2] Hence, what the latter Sartre calls *le vécu*, i.e., "life aware of itself, without implying any thetic knowledge or consciousness,"[3] is the lived experience that unfolds freedom-in-relation-to-situation. Freedom, a "paradox" little noticed in *Being and Nothingness*,[4] becomes "shocking" when the 65-year old Sartre describes it to his interlocutors as "predestination": "I do not mean to say that this sort of predestination precludes all choice, but one knows that in choosing, one will not attain what one has chosen. It is what I call the necessity of freedom."[5]

Of course, there are important differences between the early paradox of *Being and Nothingness* and the "necessity of freedom." Although Sartre's early notion of freedom was wrongly considered absolute, abstract and "disembodied," it carried far more weight than the situation. The point of Howells' book is to follow Sartre progressively shifting his focus from freedom to necessity. In the process, she might suggest that the later Sartre turned pessimistic

2. Already in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre clarified all of these terms, especially in discussing existential psychology and the case of Flaubert; see *Being and Nothingness*, part IV, ch. 2. For subsequent expositions see the section on "The progressive-regressive Method," *Search for a Method* (New York: Vintage, 1963); *La Critique de la raison dialectique*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), pp. 343ff. For a shorter definition, see "Interview on *The Idiot of the Family*," Sartre, *Life/Situations* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p. 113.

3. "Interview," *op. cit.*, pp. 127-8.

4. "Thus we begin to catch a glimpse of the paradox of freedom: there is freedom only in a situation, and there is a situation only through freedom." *Being and Nothingness*, trans. by H. Barnes, (New York: Washington Square Press/S & S, 1966), p. 629.

5. "Interview," *op. cit.*, p. 116.

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under the thickening weight of socio-historical constraints. But if one recalls the other side of the coin, i.e., the early, negative reaction to Sartre's "nihilism" which "condemned man to be free," the paradox gains additional resonance. As Howells states from the outset, the fact that Sartre has been read as either a pessimist or an activist tends to distort his evolution into a linear and oppositional interpretation (1). The net effect of mulling over Sartre's "breaks," disjointed "phases" or allegedly dead-ended and abandoned works, is the utter obliteration of a seminal paradox that Sartre's lifework sought to imbue with the "dialectical" complexities of concrete existence (100, 114 *et passim*).

In simple terms, the freedom man achieves gains substance in direct proportion to the degree that it can mitigate and can be extricated from pre-existing limitations. This interplay of loss-and-gain points to the Sartrean idea of "loser wins," one that Howells explores constantly and in the end hurls against Sartre's arrogant successors. Drawn mostly from his Genet biography, "loser wins" epitomizes how Genet's decision to lose his bourgeois respectability earns him authentic freedom on a higher level (126). Although she is not the first to note this,[6] Howells applies it as a useful prism for refracting several Sartrean configurations. Consider the idea of man as a "useless passion," as the being that "is what it is not" and vice versa: If man, as transparent freedom, attempts to coincide with being-in-itself, i.e., with the "character" reflected by his past actions, his consciousness becomes an accessory to self-deception and the recuperation of being results in the loss of his (future) freedom. Hence the passion to clutch on to a "self" as he or others define it in (necessarily) past being, is pointless, for it cancels out his project and what he is not (yet). From *The Imagination* (1936), to *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1936), *The Theory of the Emotions* (1939), *The Psychology of Imagination* (1940), and *Being and Nothingness* (1940), Howells extracts the constraints (or situations) that make consciousness an accomplice to inauthentic, i.e. "fixed," being: they range from systems of morals, to social behavior, other people's expectations, one's own past, and also include the role of imagination.

The discussion on the evolving role of imagination throughout Sartre's writings takes up a significant part of Howells' book for a broad range of reasons that can only be sketched here. It is at once another definition for freedom, for artistic creation and for the source of ethical choices. Finally, it also gives Sartre a crucial epistemological tool for understanding the psychology of human action and creativity. It is an integral part of both his agreements and disagreements with his intellectual ancestors from Kant to Hegel, to Marx, and to Kierkegaard, as well as with his contemporaries — Husserl, Heidegger, Freud and the structuralists. Howells explores the broad strokes of this tangle through an even-handed progression across the Sartrean landmarks and stays clear of jargon. (My only complaint here is her rendition of "*réflexion non complice*" as "untranslatable" but closest to "pure" reflection; the long-accepted

6. See Hazel E. Barnes, *Sartre and Flaubert* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 405, 407, 411.

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terms are "non-accessory vs. accessory" reflection).

In his pre-war writings, imagination occupies a focal point in Sartre's phenomenological psychology although it was decidedly "devalued" by comparison to perception. Imagination emerges paramount because it is "one of the ways (free) consciousness relates to the world," and unless it links itself to perception and negates the given through action, it avoids freedom, sidesteps the anguish of choosing to project, and recoils into fixed modes of being (10-19). In Sartre, this dilemma obtains a dramatic formulation in *Nausea* (1938) when Roquentin, the biography writer, exclaims: "But one must choose: to live or to narrate stories."[7] In this clearly win-(the imaginary)-or-lose (real living) situation, Roquentin's choice to live wins him the world. But what is a *writer,* indeed, what is Sartre, the practitioner of the imaginary, to do? How is he to fight his "predestination," the social "formation" and habitus[8] that have shaped his "character" as a writer?

This is obviously the point where the problem of aesthetics and the function of art quickened into a personal "existential" dilemma. The experience of wartime France, sharpened by the study of Heidegger and continuing work on literature and theater (*Les mouches*, 1943), finally explode into Sartre's conversion to committed literature. By deciding to live as a narrator of a very different, non-escapist genre of stories, Sartre subverts Roquentin's stance and also assigns himself a commitment to freedom within constraints of his own making. Howells follows the steps of his 2-year immersion in the notebooks on Ethics (*Cahiers pour une morale*, 1947-8) and his abandonment of fiction-for-fiction's-sake, in order to underline his anti-Kantian, anti-universalist ethics and his opposition to a freely legislating will which may become prey to passions. But she also stresses Sartre's agreement with Kantian maxims on the need for an ethics of universal impact (albeit born from concrete values and situations), and the duty to treat others as ends, not means. Once again, for Sartre, "loser wins": the kingdom of morality can be won only when humanity as a whole loses the crutches of abstract morals and bad faith. Moral conversion to genuine freedom entails the recognition that the pursuit of atemporal moral rules is a "useless passion" (Ch. 2).

In Sartre's own case, the choice to lose his "self" (as a successful novelist) in order to win in freedom (real life), reorients and expands his views on aesthetic theory, literary criticism and the theater of situation. The function of literature grows into an obligation on the writer's part to choose freedom at every

7. Says Sartre, "*Mais il faut choisir: vivre ou raconter*," *La nausée* (Paris: Gallimard/Folio, 1980), p. 62.

8. "Formation" and "habitus" are Pierre Bourdieu's terms used by Anna Boschetti in *Sartre and "Les Temps Modernes"* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), to argue in effect, the opposite, i.e., that Sartre became exactly the man he had been socially shaped to be. Howells' negative response to this thesis can be gathered from her brilliant reading of Sartre's autobiography (*Les mots*) as a sardonic, self-deconstructive account of character formation. For my own disagreeing view of Boschetti's book, see my review in *Telos* 69 (Fall 1986), pp. 175-89.

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junction, both for himself and for the reader. In this context, the choice requires that the writer must continuously seek to "disclose the world" through meaning, i.e., by attracting readers or spectators to situations (or art objects) that engage the subject's judgment, imagination and perception in ways that communicate the need for actively changing the world. To put it roughly in terms of "loser wins," an artist who aims and/or rests on public success will win a self only by losing the world: public acceptance enshrines him but it also muzzles his original challenge — the call to reject the accepting ways of that world.

As Sartre refines his theory of committed art and literature, the creation of art objects involves the interplay of two freedoms — the creator's and the spectator's — in ways that may lead to extremes. For, if the reader's or the spectator's freedom is recognized, their interpretation must be allowed to stand, even if it distorts the creator's intentions. The artist's loss is more than compensated by the independence and integrity gained by an art object that now elicits other, even contrary ways of thinking about the world. The classic example here is Sartre's refusal to recuperate the meaning of his play *Huis clos* (*No Exit*) which was hopelessly lost because of his famous line "hell is other people": far from being a "message of irremediable ontological pessimism," says Howells, the play was "offered as a description of inauthentic human relationship" (72). In other words, it dramatized action within the constraints we acquiesce to by looking at ourselves from the viewpoint of an external, constituted and fixed self, the one "objectively" viewed by and shared with others. Hence, for Sartre, it is neither the presence of others nor some inherent, ontological human inability to communicate and exist freely that makes for "hell." Instead it is our useless passion for clutching onto some concrete self-image which, ironically enough, derives from abstractions (what we seem like to others) that ultimately fetter our choices and prove as unhelpful as Kantian ethics in the face of a moral dilemma.[9]

Howells' treatment of Sartre's writings on artistic production, language, drama, biography and autobiography evolves as a series of answers to the original problem of freedom. If freedom is paradoxically bound by necessity and vitiated by alienation and inauthenticity, how can theater, for example, awaken people to action? In one of the best discussions to date, Howells takes on two major types of criticism raised against Sartre's dramatic output and shows them entirely unfounded. Sartre's plays have been dismissed as either too bourgeois or as radical propaganda pieces. On the first count, Howells argues that Sartre's traditional use of dramatic situations is intrinsically tied to the need for harping on everyday settings of action in the midst of inauthenticity, and to the role that an audience's imagination and perception are called to play in the face of such settings. Precisely to the extent that he does not aim at audience participation in the dramatic action, Sartre's traditionalism contains a sharp subversive element.

9. For a broader critique on Kantian ethics and Sartrean moral dilemmas, see my review of D. Detmer's, *Freedom as a Value: A Crltique of the Ethical Theory of J.-P. Sartre*, in "Sartre Revisited," *Telos* 80 (Summer 1989), pp. 193-200.

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Much like his ideas on the function of language and literature, drama must proffer situations whose meaning and course of action must be left to the spectator's critical evaluation. In both literature and theater, the narrator's viewpoint should be eclipsed in order that characters or events flow into present-time action: as Sartre himself phrased it, the author should not seem to know how the story is to develop, and in this sense, he should "lie in order to be true" (49). In the case of drama as well, a different use of a "lie" arrogates responsibility for judgement to spectators. The traditional lie of theater-as-illusion must be preserved as a buffer since, by removing it, the playwright can easily ensnare spectators into a lulling sympathy with an allegedly universal and immutable human plight, usually justified as "realism." However, in *The Condemned of Altona*, Sartre gave a provocative twist to sympathy for the protagonist, by letting the audience slip into identifying with a character that ultimately proves to be a war criminal. Thus, the "banality of evil" becomes far more disturbing than a political manifesto that audiences may take or leave, in either case, uncritically.

According to Howells, the "propaganda" charge about Sartre's works is also defused and his traditionalism ends up being far more radical than either Brechtian or avant-garde drama theories. Brechtian avant-gardism is pure *théâtre-à-thèse* which imposes a doctrine and a univocal interpretation — the playwright's. In turn, the theater "of the absurd" promotes an insidiously nihilistic stance which deadens language, communication and, ultimately, action. "Living theatre" avant-gardism is equally guilty of an uncritical vision for its attempt to annihilate all distance between stage actors and spectators. Sartre went further by "deconstructing" the actor himself: his play *Kean* focuses on facets of daily play-acting and pushes to the limit the idea that the good actor is at his freest when least true to himself, i.e., when totally bound by his role as other (ch. 4).

With the 1960 *Critique*, the paradox of freedom challenges Marxism with a dialectical inquiry into historical contingency (scarcity) which points to the shrinking potential for praxis that can effectively reverse the weight of "predestination." Ironically, Sartre's use of a Marxist method leads him to reject the illusion of Marxist dogma premised on a working class revolution. In the absence of universal commitment to genuine freedom, instances such as the Bastille events left him little reason to hope that the brief surge of genuine group praxis can be effective in the long run, especially if it is to be guided by the abstract, i.e., codified and unsituated, norms of a canonized doctrine. In winning a method, Howells notes, Sartre lost most of his audience since both bourgeois liberals and Marxists attacked him, either for "abandoning" freedom (Aron) or for "excessive individualism" and "humanism" (FCP *et al.*) that maligned the inexorable Marxist millennium.[10] And yet, freedom alone, no matter how circumscribed,

10. Substantive misinterpretations around these issues have continued to litter Sartre commentaries. John Gerassi, in *Jean-Paul Sartre: Hated Conscience of His Century*, vol. I, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), rightly condemns the propagation of "contortions" (p. 35) in books by Aronson and Hayman gloatingly featured in John Weightman's "Summing Up Sartre" (*New York Review of Books*, Aug. 13, 1987).

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can impart meaning to human failure. Going beyond Hegel and Marx, in Howells' view, Sartre recovers Kierkegaard's moment in "the concrete universal" of individual praxis that refuses to be subsumed and dissolved into "objective knowledge of history" (107-10). Howells does raise doubts on whether in his unfinished second volume of the *Critique*, Sartre could have shown that regardless of all "authorless" acts, history still pivots on freedom as the only truth about man and the only source of historical intelligibility. But in the same breath she dismisses the "humanist," structuralist and deconstructionist attacks that have savaged Sartre and have dissolved man in deterministic structures and/or abstractions (111-15).

Among such structures, of particular interest is Howells' balance-sheet on Sartre's contribution to psychoanalysis through his autobiography and biographies, especially in the *Idiot* (chs. 7, 8). She appears justifiably annoyed at the wide notoriety Lacan has enjoyed, in view of the fact that all of his psychoanalytical theories reap the benefits of Sartre's central tool toward "comprehension," the role of language. Even though Sartre was influenced by Lacan into a *rapprochement* with some aspects of Freud's unconscious he had earlier rejected or misunderstood, he remains largely a *bête noire* for both Freudians and post-Freudians. The latter feel too close for comfort when it comes to notions like the self and the way language reveals the unconscious. On these same counts, Freudian detractors buffet Sartre with pompous and silly accusations such as omitting an Oedipal complex analysis of Flaubert and/or relying on written testimony — as opposed to the oral strictures of classical couch methods. But, as Barnes' invaluable monograph has also argued, while extremely judicious with available facts on Flaubert, Sartre's deciphering is hardly boring. His crime is the irreverent use of imagination and the zealous striving to close "gaps" which Freudians brandish as the exclusive province of established psychoanalytical categories (complexes). However, it was precisely these immutable, untouchable categories that Sartre rejected as early as 1940, in *Being and Nothingness*. His argument (resumed in *Search for a Method* and often parallel to his Marxian critique of Marxists) was that, if Freudian analysis has no adequate complex for studying a particular condition or "gap," it either stretches facts to fit the theory or it denies the existence of an anomaly altogether. In any case, Howells here misses the opportunity to note that, as opposed to objective discoveries, Freudian complexes deploy symbolic paradigms at best: quite apart from instrumentality, they remain egregiously inventive fabrications.

For Sartre, the lack or presence of an oedipal complex ultimately explains as little as Marxist class analysis about the case of Flaubert — the uncommitted yet fiercely anti-bourgeois writer — since both approaches attempt to conform him to their respective "knowledge." In contrast, the dialectical non-synthesis of freedom and necessity as experienced (*vécu*) illuminates failure as the unintended consequence of a freely chosen course of action. The message of "loser wins" is always about to be reversed. Flaubert, the aphasic, resolves to

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lose in the bourgeois world of practical language in order to win in the anti-bourgeois literature of the imaginary; yet, to his horror, the reading bourgeoisie snatches his goal and deflects his contempt by opening their arms to his "realism." In the guise of objective and reifying reality, necessity is still the springboard to freedom, much like the tiny step back before the long jump.

The current neo-structuralist and deconstructionist rages offer fresh grist for Howells' provocative reading of Sartre's autobiography. Written in the past tense, *Les mots* subverts his own theory about novel writing that, through the present tense, aims at a sense of surprise and an allowance of freedom for the reader. Deconstructing brilliantly the weight of necessity in his own formation, Howells' Sartre becomes the prototype of a meta-deconstructivist.

"Loser wins" is also the final assessment in Howells' concluding chapter on Sartre's place in the contemporary French scene. She minces few words in detailing Derrida's trendy ideas as derivative spinoffs of insights expropriated and distorted from Sartre. In brief, among men like Lacan, Foucault, Levi-Strauss and Lyotard, Derrida is found most guilty of obstructing the radical potential of Sartrean motifs, of falsely accusing him of bourgeois humanism(!) and of largely appropriating Sartre's critique of Husserl as his own. Even the catchy idea of *différance* is directly descended from Sartre's consciousness-in-flight, a notion that Derrida has leveled by wrongly treating consciousness as a form of Being whereas, for Sartre, it is the opposite — the nihilation of being. Howells balks at Derrida's transparently Sartrean non-recuperative transformations which, by rejecting Hegelian syntheses and negative theology, end up openly adopting the Sartrean whirligig of "loser wins." So much for breaking new ground.

In this exceptional book Howells gives us a Sartre for whom doubt and self-doubt defused philosophy's self-absorption with the spirit of seriousness and exploded it into high drama on a human scale. Early in his career, alighting on unexplored territory, Sartre resisted the quick thrill of climbing straight up to the highest panorama where spatial gradations evaporate in the dazzle of timelessness. More like an old-fashioned traveller, meandering tirelessly underfoot, he delighted in the mosaic of partial views and changing light. His detractors have often given the troubling impression that his ingenious choice of itinerary invalidates the legitimacy of the questions he explored.[11] Even so, Howells is right: loser wins after all.

Eleni Mahaira-Odoni

11. Lamenting along similar lines, Suhl notes graphically: "At the philosophers' convention in New York in 1969 an observer put it this way: 'When critical philosophers point their finger to reality, orthodox philosophers study the finger'." See Benjamin Suhl, *Jean-Paul Sartre: The Philosopher as a Literary Critic* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 271, n. 13.

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Croce, Gramsci and Marxism

Ernesto G. Caserta, *Croce and Marxism: From the Years of Revisionism to the Last Postwar Period* (Naples: Morano, 1987).

In these days of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, the crisis of Marxism has finally hit "really existing socialism" where it hurts. This vindicates the classic critiques of Marxism and invites their reconsideration. Among the critics of Marxism, Benedetto Croce deserves a special place. His arguments precipitated the first so-called crisis of Marxism in the 1890s. During his lifetime (1866-1952), he influenced an entire generation of Italians,[1] and abroad his influence was greatest among philosophers of history in Britain (e.g., Collingwood) and among literary critics in the US (where it spawned the so-called "new criticism").[2] Croce's involvement in cultural diffusion by means of publishing ventures and his occasional involvement in politics contributed to the dissemination of his thought. Before WWI his laicism as well as his view that art and poetry have cognitive content and epistemological value made him something of a radical. Nevertheless, he avoided all extremisms identified with futurism, nihilism, and relativism. He thus managed to disappoint both conservatives and revolutionaries. Between the two world wars he was a leading critic of Fascism, though, again, Fascism's more violent opponents mistook him as a Fascist apologist while the Fascist establishment regarded him a subversive. After WWII he was instrumental in the re-establishment of constitutional government in Italy, again displeasing the forces of both right and left. After his death, Croce was quickly forgotten. In his own country, Italians wanted to build a new Italy and tended to reject their past wholesale

Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in his thought.[3] The reasons

1. See Edmund E. Jacobitti, "Hegemony Before Gramsci: The Case of Benedetto Croce," *Journal of Modern History*, 52: 66-84.

2. See N.P. Stallnecht, "A Note on Croce and American Literary Criticism," in L.M. Palmer and H.S. Harris, editors, *Thought, Action, and Intuition* (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1975), pp. 280-94.

3. In the US especially, his treatise on poetry and literature [Benedetto Croce, *Poetry and Literature: An Introduction to Its Criticism and History*, trans. by G. Gullace. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981).] was finally translated, freeing English-speaking readers from their limited dependence on his *Aesthetics*. [B. Croce, *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistics*, trans. by D. Ainslie (New York: Noonday Press, 1972).] The English translation of his monograph on Hegel has been

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for this revival are not solely academic, but reflect broader socio-cultural developments. In Italy, a general disillusionment with Marxism has led to a search for alternatives and to a rediscovery of Croce's brand of "liberalism," — a combination of principled moderation and principled pluralism. Such a liberalism can work with conservatism; can be critical of, but respectful toward Catholicism (the third available cultural alternative); and can claim (with some justice) to have appropriated what is alive of assorted Marxist views and to have discarded what is dead.

The explanation for Croce's resurgence in this country is more complex, and it may have something to do with the anti-positivist, humanistic, and historicist components of Croce's thought. Croce was critical of the view that the method of physics is appropriate for the humanities and the social sciences. Similarly, his historicism is useful for a historical approach to science, which is now predominant in this country. Caserta's *Croce and Marxism* may be viewed as part of this development. To be sure, the recent revival does not lack studies on the topic of Croce and Marxism.[4] But Caserta's work provides one of the few useful introductions to this topic in English. The book is structured as a chronological account of Croce's many writings on the subject, making it serviceable as an annotated bibliography of Croce's writings on Marxism. Since the work is expositional, its intention must be primarily introductory. Caserta also discusses most of Croce's essays on political criticism, political theory, and the history of political theory, since they relate to his analysis of Marxism.

Caserta, however, entirely sides with Croce's criticism of Marxism. In so doing, he fails to distinguish two main periods in Croce's criticism of Marxism: initially, Croce was mainly appreciative and constructive in his criticism;

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reprinted [B. Croce, *What Is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel*, trans. by D. Ainslie. New Introduction by Pete A.Y. Gunter (Lanha: University Press of America, 1985).], a work which advanced the original interpretation of Hegel's dialectic as a way of thinking which avoids one-sidedness and provides great insight into the study of the history of philosophy, while critical of Hegel for misapplying the dialectic to other domains such as historical events, empirical facts, art, moral experience, and economic activity. We have also had an increasing variety of secondary literature, ranging from an elementary, general, philosophical introduction to his work [M.E. Moss, *Benedetto Croce Reconsidered: Truth and Error in Theories of Art, Literature, and History* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1987).], and a short critical comparison with other literary critics [René Welleck, *Four Critics: Croce, Valery, Lukács and Ingarden* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981).], to a competent and valuable historical account of his connection with the tradition of revolutionary humanism in Italy [E. Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism and Historicism in Modern Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).], and to a major appreciative and critical reassessment by David D. Roberts entitled *Benedetto Croce and the Uses of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).]

4. See, for example, Antonio Jannazzo, *Croce e il comunismo* (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1982); and Manlio Ciardo, *Marx e Croce* (Naples: Generoso Procaccini Editore, 1984).

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but after 1911 (with the publication of "The Death of Socialism") and maturing with WWI and the Bolshevik Revolution, Croce became highly critical and dismissive of Marxism. In the first period, Croce partially accepted historical materialism as a method for historical explanation. But he went to great lengths to clarify that his position was as much a defense as an objection: a defense against those who think that the only form of knowledge is provided by universal principles,[5] and an objection to those who did believe in their universal validity. Similarly, in regard to the labor theory of value, Croce understood it as a hypothesis explaining the existence of profit in a capitalist society. This defended the idea from those critics who objected that the theory is completely wrong, while undermining it in the eyes of those who took it as a general principle of true economic science. In the second period, Croce's criticism tried to show that Marxism has all the bad and vulgar features of theology and religion, and that it has no cognitive content but only practical, ideological import. As Gramsci argued in the *Prison Notebooks*,[6] this goes against Croce's method of criticism in general; and in particular, it conflicts with Croce's own sympathetic view of the nature and function of religion in the maintenance of a civic community. It also contradicts Croce's own theory of the historicity of philosophy, which he regarded as his most significant intellectual accomplishment.

This raises the crucial question of the relation between Croce and Gramsci. Caserta examines the essays on Gramsci written in response to the posthumous publication of Gramsci's works without engaging in any serious evaluation of Croce's analysis of Gramsci's writings. This prevents Caserta from detecting the deeper similarity underlying the apparent clash between the two thinkers. In fact, when Gramsci's letters from prison were first published in book form[7] in 1947, Croce wrote a favorable review, stating among other things that "Antonio Gramsci . . . as a thinker was one of us, of those Italians who in the first decades of the century took care to develop a philosophical and historical mind adequate for current problems, and who included me as an older person among younger ones."[8] However, the following year, starting with the publication of Gramsci's notes on him, he became very critical —

5. People such as Giovanni Gentile, who also equated universally valid principles with philosophy, and who therefore denied a philosophical status to Marxism; see G. Gentile, *La filosofia di Marx* (First edition 1899. Fifth edition, Florence: Sansoni, 1974).

6. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, edited by Valentino Gerratana (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), pp. 1207-1362.

7. Antonio Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere* (Turin: Einaudi, 1947), now superseded by the more complete and critical edition, *Lettere dal carcere*, edited by S. Caprioglio and E. Fubini (Turin: Einaudi, 1965), a selection from which is available in English in *Letters from Prison*, edited and translated by Lynne Lawner (New York: Harper, 1973), and also in *Gramsci's Prison Letters*, trans. by Hamish Henderson (London: Pluto Press, 1988).

8. B. Croce, "Antonio Gramsci, *Lettere dal carcere*," *Quaderni della critica*, vol. 3, no. 8, 1947, p. 86.

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contemptuously and dismissively so.[9] By 1950 he was writing, "Gramsci could not create new thoughts and bring about the portentous revolution which some attribute to him because . . . his intention was solely to found a political party in Italy, a task which has nothing to do with the search for truth."[10]

Caserta is fully aware of the political reasons which motivated such a shift on Croce's part, and they are easy to understand: Gramsci's historical connection with the Italian Communist Party, and the Party's connection with Stalinism after Gramsci's death. Croce had come to accept the interpretation of Gramsci provided by Palmiro Togliatti, Gramsci's former college classmate and his heir to the Party leadership, which exploited Gramsci's writings politically as part of the Party's anti-capitalist struggle.[11] Caserta, unfortunately, joins Croce in such an uncritical acceptance of Togliatti's contruction.[12] Furthermore, Caserta never critically examines Croce's initial judgment on Gramsci. A closer examination of Croce and Gramsci would have shown how both belonged to the same tradition of thought.

Therefore, Caserta's book may be criticized for not taking sufficiently seriously the relation between Croce and Gramsci, for failing to show the tradition to which both thinkers belong, and thus for contributing to the continual misconstrual of both thinkers on this side of the Atlantic. To be sure, Caserta does not pretend to be addressing these deeper issues. So, while he may be credited for his modesty, this also prefigures some of the work that remains to be done.

Maurice A. Finocchiaro

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9. A. Gramsci, *Il materialismo storico e la filosofia di Benedetto Croce* (Turin: Einaudi, 1948).

10. B. Croce, "Un gioco che ormai dura troppo," *Quaderni della critica*, vol. 6, nos. 17-18, 1950, p. 231, reprinted in *Terze pagine sparse* (Bari: Laterza, 1955), vol. 2, p. 252.

11. See, for example, Palmiero Togliatti, *Antonio Gramsci*, edited by Ernesto Ragionieri (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1972); and *On Gramsci and Other Writings* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979).

12. The irony is compounded by the fact that whereas Croce never changed his mind, Togliatti eventually changed his. In fact, just before he died in 1964 Togliatti confessed: "It has been completely right for us to regard Gramsci's life as an integral part of the life of our party, of its political investigations and elaborations, of its struggles, of its sacrifices. I hope this view has not reduced the personality of our comrade, or given it a wrong emphasis, such as to fail to include and explain all its aspects and its real essence. . . . One thing is sure, that today . . . it seemed to me that the very person of Antonio Gramsci should be placed in a more living light that transcends the historical vicissitudes of our party. . . . Antonio Gramsci is the critical conscience of a century of history in our country" (*Paese Sera*, 19 June 1964, reprinted in Togliatti, *Antonio Gramsci* (Rome, 1972), pp. 218-19.

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The Future of Critical Theory

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Participants: ***Adler, Anderson, Berman, Breines, Buck-Morss, Congdon, D'Amico, Funk, Gottfried, Gross, Hullot-Kentor, Jacoby, Luke, Mahaira-Odoni, Piccone, Riesch, Spiegler, Ulmen, Volpacchio***

Although efforts in the 1950s and 1960s to reground Critical Theory ran into the blind alleys of Freudian, neo-Kantian and most recently communication theory, the Hegelian and phenomenological foundations were never systematically articulated. The panel on "The Foundation of Critical Theory" will reconsider these and other historically bypassed traditions as well as the post-modernist challenge to all foundational thinking.

Critical Theory was initially formulated in the 1930s in the midst of Nazism, fascism and Stalinism. As a result, whatever political theory was developed could not avoid being utterly pessimistic if it wanted to be minimally realistic. The prospects of a totally administered society, however, were greatly overestimated. Today, Weber's "iron cage" is rapidly rusting in a context where the effects of administration have eroded even the possibility of deploying potential opposition movements as regulatory internal mechanisms for a system growing increasingly irrational and aimless. The project of a Brave New Class failed. At the end of the Cold War — itself the result of the glamorous collapse of the most sanguine of all recent New Class projects — traditional political theories of liberalism, democracy and socialism seem to be terminally exhausted. The panel on political theory will deal with this predicament as well as possible alternatives.

Because of its pessimism and troubled career, with the possible exception of Marcuse in the 1960s, Critical Theory has historically avoided concrete political engagements, triggering charges of elitism, opportunism, and worse. This does not imply the lack of perspective on various and presently fashionable "political stands," whose latent function is primarily academic legitimation. The panel on political movements will discuss these issues.

The panel on "The Culture Industry" will tackle one of the key idea of the first generation of Critical Theorists and anchored their original analysis of advanced industrial societies. In the era of video and post-modernism, this may also have aged. The central plan — in culture as much as anywhere — is finished, but the predominant logic of domination remains. This panel will discuss ways in which a reconstituted Critical Theory may deal with culture today.

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